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ABSTRACT

This training manual is designed to increase the interviewing, counseling, and placement skills of counselors in public agencies who work with older clients seeking employment. Information concerning the needs and concerns of older people is included, focusing on training to enhance individual and group counseling skills as well as structured training in group methodology for job-search, problem-solving, and job development skills. The materials provide an overview of the training program, its goals, objectives, and needs assessment followed by: (1) plans for developing the training program; (2) activities and exercises for learning about gerontology and older workers; (3) an interpersonal skills package for enhancing intergroup processes; and (4) an eight-part series of structured group training modules for career management. The appendix contains sample needs assessment, activity, and evaluation forms. (JAC)

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ASSISTING THE OLDER JOB SEEKER:

A COUNSELOR TRAINING MANUAL

Educational Series, Number 6.

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A carefully designed product consumes vast amounts of time and resources during its development. This training manual is no exception, and recognition of the dedicated efforts and cooperation of many hardworking individuals is rightfully due.

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Second, I am grateful to the local agencies who cooperated with us by selecting excellent participants from their agencies, and by allowing them ample release time to attend the training program. The cooperating agencies included: Virginia Employment Commission, Richmond Area Manpower Planning System (RAMPS), Henrico-Hanover-Chesterfield CETA Consortium, United Way of Greater Richmond, Virginia Penitentiary, Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped, and the Capital Area Agency on Aging. Without exception, the participants from these agencies were active, intelligent, and caring individuals who were also willing to give us honest feedback on the development of our training.

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Jean Gasen Romaniuk

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years, the dramatic rise in the number of late middle aged and older persons in the United States has drawn increasing attention to the difficulties and hardships experienced by this age group. One of their major problems is unemployment. Many older persons need at least part-time employment to assure an adequate retirement income. Even if work is not an economic necessity, many still want to work because it is a source of meaningful activity and self-respect. The Virginia Office on Aging, upon analysis of available information concerning people age 65 or older, found that their largest source of income is Social Security benefits, that these benefits are inadequate to meet their economic needs, that those who depend solely upon Social Security endure considerable financial hardship, and that the elderly are more adversely affected by the high cost of living than other segments of the population (Wilson, Bercini, and Richards, 1978). Job seekers aged 55 to 64 face even more urgent and pressing problems than those who have reached retirement age. They most often need full-time work rather than part-time employment. Their periods of unemployment tend to be longer than those of younger workers. Continued unemployment results in even greater hardships for their families than for those of retired persons.

Recent legislation to raise the earning limit for Social Security payments, to raise the permissible mandatory retirement age from 65 to 70, and to abolish age-based retirement rules for most federal workers promises to alleviate some of the employment problems faced by older workers. Title I of the Older Americans Act of 1965 declared that older adults are entitled to "an adequate income in retirement," "employment with no discriminatory personnel practices because of age," and "meaningful employment opportunities." Increasing efforts are being made to assist older job seekers to secure employment. Under Title V of the Older Americans Act, the Senior Community Service Employment Program provides part-time public service employment for low income persons 55 or older. Various organizations and agencies such as CETA, state employment offices, the Urban League, etc., are increasing their emphasis upon placement of older job seekers.

Nevertheless, there are still many barriers to employment of older workers. The older job seeker not only encounters all of the typical difficulties of any other job seeker, but also faces other more unique, and often more difficult, problems simply because of his or her age. These problems, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III, include age discrimination, unfounded myths and stereotypes of the physical, emotional and social effects of aging, lack of formal educational credentials, transportation problems, and even their own self-defeating attitudes. Although public agencies are increasing their emphasis on job placement of older workers, the training of placement specialists and employment counselors has not prepared them to deal with the special needs and difficulties of this group. The rising number of unemployed older persons due to the

advancing age of our nation's population as a whole is increasing the urgency of providing training to upgrade counselor skills for working with this client population.

B. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing this need for counselor training, the Virginia Center on Aging at Virginia Commonwealth University, in cooperation with the Department of Gerontology, has developed a training program to increase the interviewing, counseling, and placement skills of counselors in public agencies who work with late middle age and older clients seeking employment. Preliminary discussions of the feasibility and nature of such a program were begun in early 1979. The program evolved with three main components: (1) information concerning the nature of the aging process and the special problems, needs, and concerns of this age group, particularly as they relate to employment; (2) training to enhance individual and group counseling skills in working with older job seekers; and (3) structured training group methodology in job search, problem-solving, and job development skills. This training was developed as a demonstration project, with employment counselors in public agencies in the Richmond metropolitan area.

Preliminary contacts were made with potential participating agencies in the Richmond area (such as the Henrico-Chesterfield-Hanover CETA Consortium, the Virginia Employment Commission, the Richmond Area Manpower Planning System, the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, and the Richmond Urban League) and the need for, and their interest in, such a program was discussed. These contacts resulted in strong expressions of support and a desire to participate in such training. In April, 1979, a grant proposal was submitted to the Governor's Employment and Training Council for funds to develop, implement, and evaluate a model training program for employment counselors who serve middle-aged and older clients. The Council approved funding for the project to begin in October, 1979.

The project staff began its work by meeting in October with administrators of participating agencies to outline the background, purpose, and objectives of the grant; to explain the nature of participation expected of trainees; and to discuss the selection of participants and the procedure to be used in needs assessment. After this meeting, an intensive needs assessment was conducted, detailed plans were made for the first month of training, and an outline of the content areas to be included in subsequent sessions was developed. Training sites were selected, and various materials and training aids (including videotapes for demonstration of counseling skills) were developed. Arrangements were made to provide credit for participation in the form of continuing education units (CEU's), and to provide an option for earning undergraduate credit for the training through the Gerontology Department for trainees who wished to do so.

The training began on January 17, 1980, and was completed on May 15, 1980. The original training schedule was modified both due to inclement weather and in response to continuing feedback from participants. The trainers solicited both oral and written feedback at the end of each session, including suggestions for improving the training for future sessions. This input from the group was always considered in planning future sessions, and became the basis for several modifications of the original training format. As will be discussed in Chapter VI, the outcome of the training was not entirely as envisioned in the planning stage.

Nevertheless, the training program seems to have been quite successful, and this training manual has been published to enable others to implement similar training in their communities. It includes modifications and improvements based upon our experience as the program progressed.

C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING

As previously stated, the goal of the program was to develop and implement a demonstration project for local employment counselors to improve interviewing, placement and counseling services for their late middle aged and older clients. More specifically, the following objectives were established:

Objective 1: To facilitate greater understanding of the process of aging, i.e., the physical, social, and psychological changes as well as the economic and legal problems that are associated with late middle and old age.

(a) To help participants better understand mid- and late life changes (such as physical losses, widowhood, divorce, forced retirement, etc.) as well as special employment problems (such as no prior work history, obsolete skills, etc.) which make finding employment a difficult task for the late middle age and older worker.

(b) To dispel myths and stereotypes which depict late middle age and older workers as undependable, unproductive, or not adaptable to new situations.

(c) To understand the impact of the economy on aging and vice versa.

(d) To recognize age discrimination and become aware of relevant legislation as it relates to employment.

Objective 2: To increase the proficiency of participants in the use of interviewing, counseling, and placement skills designed specifically for late middle age and older workers.

(a) To develop or augment interpersonal communication skills in both individual and group counseling settings as they relate specifically to late middle age and older clients.

(b) To enhance their skills of helping clients to identify, analyze, and solve the problems encountered in job-seeking.

(c) To develop skills in facilitating older clients' self-assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses, establishment of goals and priorities, and selection of jobs and individual tasks which best fit their background, interests, skills, values and objectives.

Objective 3: To establish collaborative networks among CETA staff and other employment organizations in local communities.

(a) To involve representatives from a number of community agencies in the local demonstration training project.

(b) To foster the development of formal and informal ties which will continue beyond the period of training of the demonstration project and will enhance reciprocal communication and cooperation in the placement of late middle age and older workers within the targeted localities.

Objective 4: To produce a model training program, with appropriate instructional materials, which can be used in communities throughout Virginia.

(a) To develop instructional materials which can be used by the participants upon completion of the training in their work with clients. The materials will be evaluated and refined during the project period in order to improve the training manual.

(b) To develop a comprehensive training manual which includes a description of (1) the program's objectives and orientation, (2) the content, including the instructional materials used, and (3) the evaluation instruments employed to determine the effectiveness of the training. This document will be made available to other Prime Sponsors and employment agencies serving middle age and older workers in Virginia.

Objective 5: To conduct a summative evaluation to assess the impact of the training program upon the participating agency staff.

(a) To assess how the training program has affected the participants in terms of their knowledge about the special concerns and problems of this target group, their attitudes toward the employment potential of these workers, and their skills in facilitating self-assessment, group counseling, and employment strategies for this group.

(b) To formulate recommendations, based upon the evaluation, concerning how best to implement the model training program in other Prime Sponsor areas in Virginia.

D. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the needs assessment was to collect information from potential participants so that the program could be as responsive as possible to their specific needs. The project staff had developed a reasonably clear overall understanding of participant needs through preliminary contact with participating agencies while developing the grant proposal and through the initial meeting with agency administrators held at the beginning of the project. However, it was

important to assess the needs and expectations of the program participants themselves, in order to both maximize the training benefits derived and to increase their motivation for participation.

The project staff conducted structured interviews with more than half of the potential participants. Persons to be interviewed were selected to provide as representative a cross-section of agencies and of participants as possible. At least one counselor from each participating agency was interviewed. Questions focused on the counselor's educational background, her or his experiences and concerns related to working with older job seekers, and his or her desired emphases of the training program.

In general, the interviews revealed a high degree of interest in the training program on the part of the potential trainees. They indicated that they would like work on improving their communication skills, to learn to deal with potential employers for older workers in a more effective manner, and to receive information concerning legal issues in employment interviews. Counselors emphasized that the majority of their clients are economically disadvantaged and that many have low levels of education and experience. Many of those interviewed felt that the training should be sensitive to these and other related issues. As you can see, these concerns were all consistent with the training objectives of the program, but were quite helpful in deciding what to emphasize in the more detailed planning of topics to be covered and the specific content of the training sessions.

E. OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

There are three major areas, or components, of training derived from the training objectives and the expressed needs of the trainees: (1) basic information concerning gerontology and the older job seeker, (2) interpersonal skills training and practice, and (3) structured training group sessions for career planning. Table 1.1 displays these three components of the training program, along with the specific topics or lesson plans which are associated with each one.

The focus of the gerontology component is the dissemination of information to promote better understanding of aging in relation to job seeking, and to provide a conceptual background for the other two components. The training method for this component is primarily didactic. The emphasis of the other two components is upon acquisition and improvement of skills. Since experiential, rather than didactic, learning is the most effective means of skills training (Drum & Knott, 1977; Alpaugh & Haney, 1978), the structured training group method was adopted for these components.

For interpersonal skills training, the structured training group has several advantages. Because the groups have a definite structure, they communicate a sense of goal-directedness and raise expectations that the goal can be achieved. They increase the enjoyment of the learning process. They are relatively nonthreatening because they focus on a stated goal, thereby creating a sense of psychological safety for group members in that the training will not turn into an encounter group. Appropriate structured exercises gently but firmly encourage participants to try out new behaviors or examine issues they might otherwise

Table 1.1

Summary of Topics Contained in the Training Manual

GERONTOLOGY AND THE OLDER JOB SEEKER

(1) Developmental Overview of Aging

(2) Mid-Life Concerns

(3) Learned Helplessness

(4) Myths and Stereotypes

(5) Economics of Aging

(6) Legal Aspects of Employment: ADEA and Age Discrimination

(7) Marketing the Older Job Seeker: The Roles of the Employment Counselor and Client

(8) Availability of Job Opportunities for Older Workers

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

(1) Nonverbal Communication and Attending

(2) Paraphrasing

(3) Open-ended Questions

(4) Responding to Affect

(5) Advanced Communication Skills

(6) Problem-solving Assistance

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUPS

(1) STG Session 1: Overview; Ice-Breaking Exercise; Self-Assessment of Abilities

(2) STG Session 2: Self-Assessment of Strengths; Interview Skills: Starting the Interview

(3) STG Session 3: Self-Assessment of Interests; Interview Skills: Giving Positive Information

(4) STG Session 4: Self-Assessment of Values; Interview Skills: Nonverbal Communication

(5) STG Session 5: Field Surveys, Interview Skills: Responding to Difficult Questions

(6) STG Session 6: Qualifications Summary; Completing Applications

(7) STG Session 7: Developing Job Leads; Contacting Employers; Resumes

(8) STG Session 8: Decision Making

try to avoid. Both peer and professional feedback is given relating to skills being practiced, and peer involvement in the feedback process is an important factor in enabling participants to feel comfortable in attempting new behaviors. They provide a safe environment for practicing new behaviors, and learning is enhanced through observing other group members.

The advantages of structured training groups for older job seekers include all of the ones just mentioned. In addition, the fact that they are in a group with others who have similar problems and concerns shows them that they are not alone. The mutual assistance, support, encouragement and motivation which group members give each other can be very powerful in counteracting the depression and feelings of helplessness characteristic of so many older job seekers. From the agency's standpoint, a most important advantage is that structured groups are more cost-effective than individual counseling.

At first, we had planned to cover each of the three components separately, one after the other, since this seemed to be a logical progression. The gerontology component would provide the background and conceptual framework for the training. The interpersonal skills training would allow the participants first-hand experience in the effectiveness of the structured group method. They would then go through the structured group program for job seekers, playing the role of older job seekers. This would allow them the opportunity to experience first-hand how it feels to go through the program, thus increasing their sensitivity to the experiences of participants in groups they would conduct. At the same time, it permitted the trainers to model effective group leader behaviors in conducting the program. Some time would be spent after each session discussing the session from the standpoint of leading it.

However, one of our major concerns in designing and conducting the training was to maximize the level of interest and motivation of the trainees. Therefore, as our planning progressed, we decided to introduce as much variety into each session as possible. We accomplished this by interweaving the gerontology and interpersonal skills components throughout the earlier sessions, followed by the structured group program for job seekers. Table 1.2 illustrates the content and format of the training sessions as they were actually presented. We found that we were able to integrate the components in such a way that we were still able to accomplish our intended sequence of experiences.

The manual is organized to provide a brief overview of the most important topics within each component. All three components begin with an introductory section which provides background information concerning the rationale, content, and format of the topics contained therein. The specific instructional content for each topic consists of explicit training objectives, brief mini-lectures, goal-directed activities or exercises, discussion questions, and approximate time guidelines, as appropriate. A bibliography of supplementary readings is also included for each component and for many of the individual topics to provide you with more in-depth coverage of pertinent information. Mini-lectures provide the framework for instruction. They are designed to be concise, easy to read, and a quick reference source for the essential concepts of that training segment. We have found it very useful to hand out either mini-lectures or summaries to participants, since comprehension is facilitated when they are able to follow along as the material is presented. Participants also reported that they found these handouts helpful for review between sessions.

Table 1.2

Training Program Outline

Session #	Session Length	Component	Topic(s) within Component
1	Full Day	Gerontology and the Older Job Seeker	Developmental Overview of Aging
		Interpersonal Skills	Ice-Breaking Exercise Nonverbal Communication and Attending
2	Half Day	Gerontology and the Older Job Seeker	Mid-Life Concerns
		Structured Training Groups	Introduction and Overview**
		Interpersonal Skills	Paraphrasing
3	Half Day	Gerontology and the Older Job Seeker	Myths and Stereotypes Learned Helplessness
		Interpersonal Skills	Open-Ended Questions Responding to Affect
4	Half Day	Interpersonal Skills	Advanced Communication Skills Introduction to Use of Videotape
5	Half Day	Gerontology and the Older Job Seeker	Legal Aspects of Employment: ADEA and Age Discrimination Availability of Job Opportunities for Older Workers
		Interpersonal Skills	Videotape Practice

(Continued on Next Page)

Table 1.2 (Continued)

Training Program Outline

Session #	Session Length	Component	Topics
6	Full Day	Gerontology and the Older Job Seeker	Economics of Aging Marketing the Older Job Seeker: The Roles of Employment Counselor and Client
		Interpersonal Skills	Problem-Solving Assistance
		Structured Training Groups	Introduction to Establishing Groups** Career Management
7	Full Day	Structured Training Groups	STG Session 1: Overview; Ice-Breaking Exercise; Self-Assessment of Abilities STG Session 2: Self-Assessment of Strengths; Interview Skills: Starting the Interview STG Session 3: Self-Assessment of Interests; Interview Skills: Giving Positive Information
8	Full Day	Structured Training Groups	STG Session 4: Self-Assessment of Values; Interview Skills: Non-verbal Communication STG Session 5: Field Surveys; Interview Skills: Responding to Difficult Questions STG Session 6: Qualification Summary; Completing Applications
9	Full Day	Structured Training Groups	STG Session 7: Developing Job Leads; Contacting Employers; Resumes STG Session 8: Decision Making Practical Tips for the STG Leader **
		Gerontology and the Older Job Seeker	Issues in Older Worker Employment**

**These are not listed as formal topics in the training manual. However, they were important parts of the training program, so they are included here.

We found the training program as described in the manual to be quite successful and are confident that it would also be successful if implemented elsewhere. However, this manual should be viewed as a guide to design your own training program since different groups of participants may have differing needs. Time constraints also may preclude a training schedule such as we followed. Different trainers may have training styles which would make it desirable to modify or adapt our materials. In other words, we hope that you will use this manual not as a "cookbook" to be slavishly followed, but as a source of ideas and materials to be freely borrowed, adapted, or improved to meet your own training needs and objectives.

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CHAPTER II

PLANNING A TRAINING PROGRAM

As stated in Chapter I, the purpose of the one year demonstration project was to develop employment counselors' interviewing, placement and counseling skills with older job seekers. In order to accomplish the objectives of the project, a training program was planned and tailored to meet the needs of the training participants. In this chapter, we will provide an overview of the basic steps in planning a training program. Additionally, a set of worksheets is located in the Appendix to help you develop a program that meets your specific training needs.

It is important to recognize that training activities differ from other types of learning situations in several ways. First, the objectives of training are usually more specific and focus on the development of a few specific skills. Second, the participants may be employed full-time, and thus may be older than the "traditional" college student enrolled in courses at an academic institution. In our training program, for instance, the participants were engaged in "on the job" training and were excused from their regular duties in order to attend. Third, the outcomes of a training program are intended to impact the participants immediately, resulting in improved job performance skills. Fourth, the time allotted for training activities is usually much shorter than the amount of time available for traditional courses. Because of these and other differences, the methods for planning and conducting a training program are worth special consideration. This chapter is intended to provide you with a brief background and some initial practice in developing a training program which fits your individual needs.

Basic Steps in Planning Training Activities

Training which is well planned and organized will be most effective in meeting its objectives. The following steps represent some of the essential elements in planning a well-organized training program. These steps assume that an individual will be conducting training in a variety of settings and with different audiences. The same steps would apply if an individual is providing inservice training activities within an agency, although some of the specific conditions and recommendations might need to be modified. Also, these steps are presented in a logical sequence although we recognize that different situations may require flexibility and movement back and forth among the steps.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE TRAINING NEED

It is essential to propose training which will address the perceived and actual needs of the agency or individual who will be participating. Although this might seem obvious, it is important to realize that training which is redundant or superfluous to an individual's needs drains valuable individual time and agency resources. It may also foster a negative attitude about training, which can have long term adverse effects on individual staff members and the agency.

The method we have found most useful in determining training needs is the one-to-one personal interview with a sample of potential participants. This type of structured interview provides feedback on the types of problems faced by individuals in their job settings. It also helps delineate the specific knowledge and skills which potential participants would like to develop in meeting the demands of their jobs more effectively. A structured interview will also provide an opportunity for the trainer/needs assessor and the participant to get to know one another better (i.e., establish rapport).

The personal interview is not always feasible when large scale training is involved. In these cases a trainer's background knowledge and first-hand experience of the job is most helpful. However, we would still encourage an assessment of training needs via telephone interviews, group interviews, mail-out surveys or other methods which might be feasible to ensure that the proposed training program is relevant to the needs of the training participants.

STEP 2: ESTABLISH OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR TRAINING

Once training needs have been identified, the goals for a training program can be outlined. Overall objectives, or goals, provide a structure for the development of all further training plans. At this stage in training, these statements are fairly broad and include information on the direction and general aims of the training program. For example, two of our overall training objectives listed in Chapter I were:

a) To facilitate greater understanding of the processes of aging, i.e., the physical, psychological, and social changes that are associated with late middle and old age, and

b) To increase the proficiency of participants in the use of interviewing, counseling and placement skills designed specifically for late middle age and older workers.

In these examples, you'll note that the statements are very broad, yet provide a description of the general areas of training focus.

However, it is important to recognize that overall goals and objectives should be followed up by the development of more specific learning objectives for the individual training session(s) later on (see Step 4 for further detail). Learning objectives are different from overall goals and objectives in that they specify observable (measurable) behaviors which a participant should be able to demonstrate following training. In addition, learning objectives should specify a minimum standard needed for mastery of the behavior. And finally, a good learning objective should also specify the conditions for demonstration of the behavior. Here are two examples of learning objectives:

Example: The participant will be able to state, in his or her own words, at least three myths and stereotypes which are used to describe older job seekers.

Example: Participants should be able to demonstrate a counselor's appropriate use of nonverbal communication, including eye contact, body posture, voice, and facial expression, in a two minute role-play simulation with an older job seeker.

Specific learning objectives are important to include in any training program because they provide a solid basis for the monitoring and evaluation of the training program.

STEP 3: SELECT TRAINERS FOR PLANNING AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Training is an interpersonal communication skill. Clearly, the success of any training program heavily depends upon the effectiveness of the trainer(s). For this reason, it is important to consider in some detail the knowledge and skills which a trainer(s) should have to ensure more effective training programs. First, of course, the trainer needs to have a solid working knowledge of the basic content areas of the training. In our program, for example, the three content areas are gerontology, interpersonal skills, and structured training group methodology. As individuals with expertise in all three areas are quite rare, it is suggested that the training team be constructed of individuals with "specialty areas." In our program, we utilized one gerontologist, one counseling psychologist with specific expertise in structured groups and career development, and two advanced graduate students in counseling psychology trained in interpersonal skills. All trainers participate in all components of training, but each can devote primary attention to his or her area of greatest knowledge and ability.

General knowledge of group process is also essential. A background in facilitating group learning, with prior experience in conducting structured groups, has proven to be immensely helpful. The basic tenets of adult education serve as guidelines for facilitating the learning experience of the trainees. While we are not in the position of suggesting minimum academic qualifications for the trainers, it seems clear that familiarity with these areas is needed to insure the program's success.

Even more important than the proper knowledge base, however, is the trainer's ability to relate to the group. We have identified four basic elements of a meaningful trainer-group relationship:

a) Ability to be <u>flexible</u>. The trainer must at all times be responsive to the needs, interests, and demands of the group. Agendas are essential, but a good trainer knows when to throw an agenda out the window, and what to do next.

b) Ability to model effective interpersonal skills. The trainer will convey more about interpersonal communication by his or her own style than by the formal instruction. This ability to "put into practice" will establish the trainer's credibility in the eyes of the group.

c) Ability to instruct. This includes the ability to convey both the rationale for providing the information, and the principles of implementing the various techniques.

d) Ability to give and take feedback. Group experiences are based upon learning from others in the group. This feedback process is modeled and monitored by the trainer, who is responsible for establishing a climate for effective feedback.

Clearly, the role of trainer is a demanding one. A final consideration in working to lessen these demands is to attempt to construct a team of two or more trainers who complement each other, who work well together, and who can evenly distribute responsibilities. Using both males and females and having an age range among trainers helps to present a broader spectrum of experience and expertise. Differences in personal style add variety to the training sessions and help maintain group involvement. Like all pilot programs, our project was not without "bugs", but the ability of our trainers to cover all topic areas confidently and to function smoothly as a team insured its ultimate success.

STEP 4: DEVELOP AN OVERALL PLAN FOR TRAINING

It is much easier to develop an overall plan for training once the initial objectives have been outlined. Such a plan might include a refinement of the objectives, a brief listing of the content to be covered, the amount of time needed for training, the outcomes of training, the types of people most likely to benefit from the training, and the methods proposed to evaluate the training program.

In addition to developing an overall plan for training, it is important to consider the anticipated number of participants. For the types of formats and exercises contained in this manual, the optimum number has proven to be 10 to 12; this size group seems to allow everyone to receive ample attention, while maintaining a lively training pace. Other group sizes are possible, but the supportive atmosphere of direct contact and person-to-person learning is much more difficult to establish and maintain.

Knowledge of group size, etc., will be very useful in developing specific training sessions. It will also be helpful in offering a clear description of your training program to supervisors, administrators, and/or potential participants.

STEP 5: DEVELOP SUPPORT FOR THE TRAINING PROGRAM

a) Administrative Support: The amount of time allowed for attending training is often a function of the managerial or administrative policies concerning staff release time for these activities. It is essential that all administrative personnel who might have decision-making responsibility for the release of individual staff members are fully supportive of the training efforts. Meeting with managers or administrators and presenting an overall plan of the training program is a necessary first step in this process. In addition, written support which identifies the nature and extent of training, and the responsibilities of those who are participating, will encourage a mutual understanding and commitment for everyone involved. A general principle which we have found useful is: The longer and more involved the training, the greater the need for clearly documented support for the program from management.

b) Participant Support: Participant support will be maximized when the participants are motivated to attend. This will depend on a number of factors, and some of them may be out of the control of the trainer. However, contacting participants prior to training to solicit their input will usually develop the necessary support by demonstrating that an individual's concerns are important to the trainer in the planning phase. In general, we found that participants will be supportive (i.e., attend and be actively involved in the training) when the training is organized, interesting, relevant, and provides little extra compensations (such as lunch, coffee and donuts) which are not normally part of their working day.

STEP 6: PLAN THE INDIVIDUAL TRAINING SESSIONS

This step in the planning process is the most interesting and challenging for most trainers. At this point, it is helpful to distinguish between the content and context of planning activities. Plans for the content include activities related to what is learned and how it can be learned most effectively. Some of the activities which will need to be accomplished in this area are listed below:

1) Learning objectives for each of the training sessions should be delineated (see Step 2 for a discussion of how to design learning objectives).

2) Group exercises should be developed or modified from those in the training manual for those objectives which lend themselves to this type of learning framework.

3) An agenda for the training session(s) should be developed to ensure a logical sequence of activities, and ample time for breaks.

4) Any handout materials (e.g., reprints of articles, summaries of mini-lectures, exercises) should be prepared to reinforce the content presented during the session.

5) If any preliminary data or information will be collected, such as pretests or information on participants' backgrounds and interests, this also should be conceptualized and developed prior to training.

6) If slides, movies, or other specialized content media will be incorporated into the training, then ample time for reviewing these materials and integrating them into the flow of the session must be allowed.

7) Finally, it is important to develop a short evaluation to assess the trainees' reactions to each session.

These are just a few of the major aspects in planning for the content of the training. In addition to the content, ample attention must be given to planning the context of the training session. In this case, the context of training refers to all the other elements of preparation which can make or break a training program. These include such things as the following:

1) locating appropriate training facilities

2) arranging for a time and date for training

3) ensuring that all participants are aware of the times, dates, locations for training

4) checking to make sure that all needed equipment is available and in working order prior to training

5) arranging for meals or suggesting convenient restaurants for all day training sessions, etc.

These details may seem unimportant when viewed on an individual basis, but they can affect the quality of the training content if they are not properly addressed. For example, uncomfortable room temperatures can have a devastating effect on the process and outcomes of training. (This has been learned by experience on more than one occasion!) To assist you in considering some of these matters systematically, a checklist of items which we found very useful in our preparations for training sessions is included in the Appendices.

STEP 7: CONDUCT THE TRAINING SESSION

If the training plans have been well organized, then the easiest part of training should be conducting the training session. Right? Well, this is partially true, at least based on our experience. Even with superbly planned training programs, there are two areas which still make the training session a challenge. The first is juggling the sheer number of activities which need attention and your energy. For example, setting up the training materials, greeting participants, overseeing registration activities, getting started on time, keeping track of time, etc., etc., must be accomplished in addition to leading the training activities. To help relieve the burden of these additional worries, we recommend that each trainer be assigned specific job duties for the day. It is usually most effective to have one trainer primarily responsible for managing the content of training activities and another to help with the context of activities. The number of additional persons needed will depend on the size of the group and the type of training (i.e., smaller groups and in-service training activities may not require additional trainers).

Other concerns which always present a challenge for trainers are the omnipresent "unexpected crises." These include such things as: illness of a co-leader or guest speaker, a major blizzard, an electrical blackout, etc. Without doubt, you can count on some major, unexpected crisis to disrupt your training plans. (By the way, none of the examples mentioned above are fabricated.) To overcome the anxieties associated with this type of problem, it is best to maintain some flexibility in the training program. This might include keeping a list of alternative activities handy, or being prepared to reduce or expand the training session to meet special demands of the situation. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate and plan for unexpected crises. Therefore, knowing that they will occur may be the best preparation for keeping these crises in proper perspective.

Listed below are a few additional tips on training which we have found helpful. These are based on principles of adult learning, training, common sense, and the combined experience of the staff:

1) Have the typed agenda available to all participants prior to training.

2) Build extra time into the agenda. Rushing through activities or finishing later than expected does not impress the participants. Conversely, finishing up slightly earlier than expected may be regarded as a special bonus.

3) Start on time whenever possible and follow the agenda to give ample time to all training activities.

4) Provide an overview of the day's activities at the beginning and summarize what has been learned at the end.

5) Establish a non-threatening, supportive atmosphere to reduce the normal anxiety and tensions of participants.

6) Explain the importance of using positive feedback in the training. Model and reinforce this throughout the training.

7) Allow time for questions, comments, and reactions from the participants.

8) Design exercises which incorporate the use of an individual's past experience so that new material will be learned more quickly and retained longer.

9) Present one concept at a time and progress from the simple exercises to more complex ones. Work to insure a positive learning experience at all levels.

10) Vary the types of learning activities (e.g., mini-lecture, small group exercises, films, panel discussions, guest speakers) during the session to maintain participant interest and attention.

11) Never force participation.

12) Share personal experiences to illustrate concepts. This provides a good model for each exercise and gives the participants a better understanding and acceptance of the trainer as a human being.

13) Try to arrange the environment so that it is less formal than traditional classroom settings, i.e., use round tables, or no tables, softer chairs. If several sessions are planned, try changing the location of training to break up the monotony.

14) Allow sufficient time for coffee and bathroom breaks throughout the session.

These are just a few of the ideas which have contributed to the success of our training program. We would encourage you to add more of your own items to this list based on your experience.

STEP 8: EVALUATE THE TRAINING SESSION

It is essential to be provided with feedback on the impact of your training program. Verbal feedback is one very effective means of evaluating the training program, and the trainers should encourage an open exchange of feedback at the end of each session. In addition, a written evaluation often provides some concrete suggestions for modification of the training design. It can also provide the necessary documentation for supervisors, program administrators, or granting agencies.

There were two types of evaluations which we used in our training program: formative and summative. Formative evaluations were obtained after each session to assess its immediate value for the participants. Each of the activities (mini-lectures, guest speakers, films, etc.) was listed with space for a rating check and a comment. Also, the overall organization and facilities were rated for each session. We found these quick evaluations very useful in tailoring each succeeding training session.

A summative evaluation was conducted to assess how well the original objectives of the training were met. Information related to the knowledge and skills in the training program were assessed prior to and following training activities. An overall assessment of the trainers, facilities, organization, and usefulness of the training materials which were developed also was included in the post-training evaluations. More information on the outcomes of the evaluation efforts is included in Chapter VI.

Summary

To summarize, the basic steps in planning a training program include: 1) identify the training need; 2) establish overall objectives for training; 3) select trainers for planning and training activities; 4) develop an overall plan for training; 5) develop support for the training program; 6) plan the individual training session(s); 7) conduct the training session(s); and 8) evaluate the training session(s). These steps will apply to any type of training activity, and examples of planning worksheets are included in the Appendices to assist in your personal planning activities. The remaining chapters will illustrate how these planning efforts were developed into the components and topics in this training manual.

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CHAPTER III

GERONTOLOGY AND THE OLDER JOB SEEKER

A. INTRODUCTION

The problem of unemployment (or underemployment) for the elderly is significant. The duration of unemployment for those 65 and older is about double that of the 24-44 year-old age group, and that statistic fails to reflect the number of elderly who have simply given up the job search and are not included. However, the problem is more than just employment or the lack of it. It is one of assisting the older person in determining what is the best course for them in regaining control of their lives.

The older job seeker encounters all the difficulties of any other job seeker, plus additional problems simply because they are older. Older workers have often been depicted unfavorably when compared to younger workers, even when there is evidence to the contrary. Older people must combat discriminatory practices in hiring which often force them into less attractive positions at lower paying salaries. They are sometimes unable to seek out the information, counseling and placement services they may need to compensate for their particular liabilities such as previous (or even non-existent) work histories, lack of credentials, lack of transportation, health limitations, and often their own self-defeating attitudes. Older workers often feel helpless; they have been conditioned to accept retirement (and compulsory retirement is still very much a reality in many cases), yet they need to work for a variety of reasons. They are victims both of the economy and age discrimination. Often they perceive themselves as having no value in the labor force.

In addition to the problems and barriers to employment faced by older job seekers, employment counselors have problems, too, in dealing with older clients. Their training has focused upon the problems common to job seekers in general, but has not prepared them to deal with the special needs and difficulties of late middle age and older individuals. Employment counselors may have a lack of knowledge of the aging process, plus they may fall victim to the stereotypic images which plague the older generation. Because of the advancing age of our nation's population and the concommitant increase of older persons, there is a growing urgency to provide training to upgrade counselor skills for working with this client population.

The statistics on the employment prospects of older workers are not encouraging. Nationally, in mid-1974, there were over four million unemployed or retired persons 65 and older who wanted to work but were unemployed. Since 1950, the proportion of elderly males in the nation's labor force has decreased by more than 50 percent while the number of individuals over the age of 65 has nearly doubled. Despite a significant increase in the number of this nation's older individuals, future trends indicate further reductions in the percentage of older persons active in the labor force.

There are several profound effects of unemployment which are particularly severe for the late middle age and older worker. The first and most obvious effect is the decline in income. The effects of reduced income on meeting inflationary demands of daily living are certainly well known, but are particularly poignant for older individuals who do not face the prospect of future employment.

The fact that retirement is not voluntary for many older Americans is also significant. Forced retirement may contribute to increased psychological problems, including increases in the incidence of depression and suicide. In addition, loss of dignity, self-respect, and feelings of worthlessness often accompany unemployment. For many, forced retirement is associated with medical and emotional problems.

For these reasons, older job seekers are in a special dilemma. For a variety of reasons, they may need to work, yet are unable to obtain the counseling and placement services needed. To this end, the objectives of the Gerontology component are as follows:

1. To increase awareness of the aging process, i.e., the physical, psychological and social changes associated with mid- and late-life, and how those changes increase the difficulty of finding employment.

2. To dispel common myths and stereotypes about the elderly (which often affect both job seeker and employment counselor) with correct information.

3. To explore the employment-related issues of aging such as economics, legal concerns, barriers to employment, and successful marketing of the older job seekers.

It is necessary for an effective employment counselor to have a basic knowledge of gerontology, including some general biological, psychological, and sociological information as well as employment related issues of aging. The following topics have been prepared to meet that need:

1. Developmental Overview of Aging

2. Mid-Life Concerns: Crises and Transitions

3. Learned Helplessness

4. Myths and Stereotypes

5. Economics of Aging

6. Legal Aspects of Employment: ADEA and Age Discrimination

7. Marketing the Older Job Seeker: The Roles of Employment Counselor and Client

8. Availability of Job Opportunities for Older Workers

Each topic follows the following format: Objectives; Mini-Lecture; Handout; References/Resources; and Questions/Stimuli for Discussion.

Each of the topics can be used independently or coupled with interpersonal skills training depending on one's goals and time frame. (See Table 1.2 for suggested approaches.) In addition, there are suggestions for films, outside speakers, panels, or other resources to add variety to the session.

DEVELOPMENTAL OVERVIEW OF AGING

OBJECTIVES

1. To become aware of the physical, psychological, and social aspects of the normal aging process.

2. To become aware of the changing demographics of the aging population.

MINI-LECTURE

Aging is a universal, normal, inevitable and progressive phenomenon, which is characterized by degenerative and irreversible biological changes; these changes begin when growth stops, and ultimately culminate in the death of the organism.

Growth or development begins at the time of conception and continues on through birth, childhood, and adolescence until maturity or adulthood is reached, between the ages of 18 and 22. After maturity is reached, aging begins.

Although there has never been a paucity of literature or research on childhood and adolescence, there has been a much shorter history of research on the adult developmental stages . Only in recent years have social scientists become interested in the later portions of the life span. This research is complicated by the fact that the elderly are not a homogeneous lot. As a group, they exhibit more diversity than any other age group--physically, psychologically, and socially. One major distinction is between the "young-old" (65-75) and the "old-old" (75+); each group has its own unique set of concerns.

The aging process takes place differentially. Variability is the key word. Individuals age quickly or slowly depending on their hereditary endowment, and, to some extent, their environment and life style.

In considering the physiology of the older person, one must recognize age-related changes as opposed to pathological changes; the human body's ability to respond to those deleterious changes is a major consideration often overlooked.

Primary aging refers to hereditary factors or genes which code for aging, although the exact mechanism is unknown. Secondary aging refers to environmental factors which contribute to the aging process, such as radiation, toxic substances, and microorganisms, as well as sociological and psychological stresses. Other extrinsic influences such as nutrition, medical care, and physical exercise also affect the aging process.

Virtually all the cells, tissues, and organs demonstrate age-related declines in function. One of the most obvious changes is in the skin. The strength and elasticity decline and wrinkles appear. "Age spots" (lipofuscin) appear on

the backs of the hands. Blood flow to the skin is lessened, making the older person more vulnerable to hypothermia. The heart, lungs and kidneys have a reduced capacity. Bones become more brittle, muscles weaker, and joints stiffer. The five senses become less sensitive.

Physical aging is characterized by deleterious chronic and/or acute changes in all the systems of the body, including: the cardiovascular system (for example, the chronic condition of arteriosclerosis and the acute condition of angina); pulmonary (emphysema, edema); gastro-intestinal (indigestion, diverticulitis); urinary-reproductive (prostatism, cystitis); skeletal (osteoporosis, collapsed vertebrae); and sensory (decline in hearing, glaucoma).

Fortunately, all these declines do not happen at once: they occur so gradually and discreetly that most people intuitively adjust to them--in other words, one develops a new biological equilibrium. Thus functional capacity is maintained in spite of physical declines. For example, everyone over the age of 25 loses thousands of brain cells or neurons every day, and brain cells are not regenerated. Fortunately, the human body is over-built, so that there is a more than adequate supply of brain cells to last a lifetime. (In cases where an elderly person experiences mental impairment, it is not due to loss of brain cells. There are many possible causes, most of them reversible, but mental impairment due to loss of brain cells is a myth.)

Another example: Virtually everyone over 50 has osteoarthritis to the extent that it can be visualized on x-ray, but most people are totally unaware of it. Indeed, only five percent of the aged population is actually impaired by this condition.

Another area in which physical aging takes its toll is in the loss of muscle mass and a subsequent loss of strength. However, the physical demands of most jobs today are well below the capacities of most normal aging workers. Severe declines which do incapacitate older persons to some extent usually do not occur until well into the seventies, or even later.

As for mental abilities, the commonly held stereotype of intellectual decline in old age is inaccurate. Although reaction time is slower and there may be some difficulties for the older person in storing and retrieving information, impaired performance does not necessarily denote decreased intelligence.

Although chronic conditions abound in old age, most of them can be compensated for. In fact, less than five percent of the elderly need to be institutionalized. As for working ability, studies have shown that in most jobs, older workers perform as well as or better than younger ones. Generally, accuracy and consistency of output tend to increase with age. In addition, older workers have less job turnover, fewer accidents, and less absenteeism. Almost by definition, older workers have more experience than younger workers.

The important thing to remember is that although there are declines in virtually every organ and system of the body, functional ability still remains. There is no one age at which an individual is no longer functional. There is nothing magical about age 65. It was chosen as the retirement age when Social Security legislation was enacted in the mid-1930's, as part of the depression-spawned legislation that sought to free up jobs in the labor force. The age 65

was chosen for a couple of reasons: (1) it was patterned after Bismarck's concept of social welfare in 19th century Germany; and (2) the life expectancy at the time Social Security was enacted was about 65 years, so most workers would be dead by the time they retired, or shortly thereafter! Since 1900, the population of the U.S. has tripled, but the number of people over 65 has increased seven-fold. The life expectancy at birth in 1900 was 47 years; now it's over 67. More than 11% of the U.S. population today is over 65 and that percentage will increase; and the greatest increase will be among the "old-old" rather than "young-old", among women rather than men (women have always outlived men for about six to seven years on the average in this country), and among non-white rather than white. When our country was founded, only 20% of newborns lived to reach old age; today only 20% do not live to old age.

Why is this? Infant mortality has been greatly reduced through improved prenatal and postnatal care. Childhood mortality from infectious diseases has been virtually eliminated through mass immunization. And, on the other end of the spectrum, there have been strides in cardiovascular and other diseases of older people. In addition, our age is one of increased sanitation and better nutrition, and, in general, a higher standard of living.

It has been predicted that by the year 2000, there will be two distinct sets of elderly: the young-old and old-old. For example, a "young-old" woman may be responsible both for an aging mother ("old-old") as well as a husband ("young-old") who might be in worse shape than the mother! The problems of the aged in the future will be dominated by the special needs of the aged females. On a positive note, it is predicted that the future "young-old" will be more like today's middle-aged people. Increased longevity will also be due to: (1) advances in basic research in aging mechanisms, and applied research in diseases associated with aging, especially chronic diseases; (2) better preventive medicine and improved health and nutritional habits; (3) improved attitudes about aging and a concurrent appreciation of the later years; (4) social acceptance of retirement as a developmental stage, not a last step to the grave; and (5) the improved status and influence of women--women who enjoyed a better quality of life when younger will be more likely to maintain that style when older.

So, in summary:

(1) Old age in and of itself is not a problem. It's not a disease, and it's not a crime. Old age may be perceived as a problem because of our orientation to youth in this country, and older people have bought in that same market. If they think they're supposed to be decrepit and doddering, then their beliefs become self-fulfilling prophecies.

(2) Old age is accompanied by inevitable losses, such as physical declines and changing appearance (gray hair, wrinkles), declines in the social network (such as loss of spouse, of friends, of peers), and other, more subtle losses such as loss of self-esteem and self-worth due to loss of previous roles (worker, spouse, parent, etc.).

(3) There are some problems that may accompany old age. For example, enforced poverty for people who can't work, whether for reasons of health or inability to gain employment, is often the cause of great hardship. There is the problem of depression in retirees faced with too much discretionary time and too little

preparation to cope with the sudden increase in leisure. This may result in alcoholism or suicide. There is the problem of double jeopardy faced by some; that is, being old plus poor, or old plus female, or old plus a member of a minority, or old plus living alone. Thus, the psychological and sociological impact of aging (which will be covered in future sessions) is a far more serious concern than physical aspects of aging.

HANDOUT

Although the aging process is normal and inevitable, it takes place at different rates in different individuals; therefore, the elderly are the most heterogeneous of all age groups. Despite the deleterious physical changes that occur with aging, most elderly individuals maintain their functional capacity well beyond 65 years of age. Many of the problems encountered by the elderly are not a function of physical aging, but rather the impact of psychological and sociological considerations. Because the number of people age 65 and older has increased more than seven-fold since 1900 and is expected to double in the next 40 years, it is necessary to understand normal aging and functioning as it pertains to work and retirement, as well as a host of other issues of the elderly.

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"How We Adapt" 20 minutes/color/16 mm

Available from:

Virginia Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
James Madison Building
109 Governor Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786-1332

"Physical Changes and Their Implications" 31 minutes/color/filmstrip and cassette

Available from:

Virginia Center on Aging
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA 23298
(804) 257-1416

QUESTIONS/STIMULI FOR DISCUSSION

(1) If a middle-aged woman with a previous but not recent clerical work history applied for a clerical job vacancy in your office which normally employs five clerical workers (who happen to be younger females), what questions would you raise in the interview to determine if she were physically and psychologically "right" for the job and the environment (i.e., would she be accepted by her co-workers?).

(2) If your healthy, financially stable sixty-year-old father asked for your advice on whether or not to take early retirement, what questions would you bring up to find out if he and your mother are psychologically and socially prepared for retirement?

MID-LIFE CONCERNS: CRISES AND TRANSITIONS

OBJECTIVES

1. To define crisis and to delineate the relationship between crisis, stress, and developmental transition.

2. To provide an overview of adult developmental stages and transitions, particularly the mid-life transition.

3. To highlight some common events which often precipitate mid- and late life crises.

MINI-LECTURE

Crisis may be defined as an unstable or crucial state of affairs, or an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life. More specifically, for our purposes, a crisis is the period of instability which accompanies change. It is that more or less unsettled and uncertain state in which people find themselves when they are in between two relatively stable states or conditions -- between jobs, for example, or waiting to find out if one is pregnant. Thus, we may view crisis as the stress which accompanies transition or change. A crisis is always accompanied by stress, and too much stress can be destructive -- mentally, emotionally, and even physically.

Mid-life and late life crises are better understood in a developmental context. In the early 1900's, the noted Swiss psychiatrist, C.G. Jung, pointed out "...that the basic facts of the psyche undergo a very marked alteration in the course of life, so much so that we could almost speak of a psychology of life's morning and a psychology of its afternoon" (1975, p.39). He also noted that the two halves of life were different for men and women, because of the differences in their traditional roles. (Remember, his observations were based upon patients he treated mainly in Switzerland, and long before the recent impact of women's liberation and the feminist movement!)

For men, according to Jung, the first half of life is devoted to developing "masculine" characteristics necessary for mastery of the outer world -- getting a job, getting married, raising a family, and working one's way up in salary to achieve sufficient economic security to accomplish these goals. The second half of life is devoted to developing the neglected "feminine" aspects of personality, and at this time there is a strong tendency for men to become more passive, introspective, and attracted to people-oriented careers. On the other hand, the first half of life for women is passive, nurturing, devoted to feelings and to developing those "feminine" characteristics of homemaking, while the second half of life is devoted to developing their neglected "masculine" traits and mastery of self-in-the-world, which may include a job or some other kind of achievement-oriented activity.

With the exception of the observations of a few early theorists such as Jung, the field of developmental psychology has traditionally concerned itself almost exclusively with the early stages of life -- infancy, childhood and adolescence. It has only been within the past decade or so that research into adult development has shown that developmental crises and changes do not cease at some "magic" age such as 18 or 21, but rather continue throughout the life span. A growing body of research is demonstrating that almost all adults pass through a progressive sequence of stages throughout their lives, and that stress and crisis in varying degrees inevitably accompany the transition from one stage to the next. The recent best-seller Passages, by Gail Sheehy (1976), has drawn much popular attention to the concept of adult developmental stages, and we have recently witnessed widespread interest in concepts of adult development -- especially the mid-life crisis -- on television and in newspapers, magazines and popular books.

The major adult life stages, as described by Rachel Cox (1977) in a recent paper, are substantially more complicated for women than men. She observes that adult men in our society have only one choice -- to pursue an occupation-- and that this simplifies their typical developmental pattern. The first developmental task for men is leaving the parental home. This generally includes physically moving out, giving up financial support, getting their first job (usually with disillusionment because it does not match idealistic expections), and establishing a social network separate from the family. Next comes marriage and establishing intimacy with a wife, a task which may take half a lifetime and, indeed, which some men never accomplish. The next stage (usually dependent upon the previous one) is parenthood, with its consequent responsibilities and change in the family structure. This stage is followed by progressive advancement in work, usually accompanied by increasing commitment to community service. This commitment involves more time and attention outside the family; the family complains of seeing less and less of him, and this strain on family relationships may lead to break-up.

Next in sequence is the much-talked-about mid-life transition. Middle age normally represents one's years of fruition in terms of income, status, and influence. However, one becomes more and more aware of a sense of disquiet at being on a plateau; standing at the apex of one's achievements and not likely achieving anything greater during the remainder of one's life. Awareness of one's mortality often leads to excessive drinking or drug problems. At this point, some men consider a change in occupations, but usually feel that it is too late because retraining is too long and costly. During this stage we see men turning more and more towards humanistic values and serving others, greater emotional investment in their family and less in their career, and increasingly seeking emotional reassurance from their family. Retirement represents the final developmental stage for men, with consequent loss of self-identify through occupation and a sudden increase in amount of leisure time.

Cox maintains that things are not so easy for women because they have three choices. A woman can choose to sacrifice marriage for a career, to sacrifice a career for marriage, or try to have marriage and career simultaneously. She says that the life stages for single career women are much the same as for men, except that the midlife transition occurs earlier for women and is precipitated by approaching the end of child-bearing years. At this point, we see many late marriages occuring in this group.

The life stages for married women without careers include post-education em-

ployment; marriage, perhaps with work continuing for a time; motherhood to young children; homemaking and motherhood with children in school, sometimes with reentry into the labor market; retirement from motherhood, with increasing commitment of time to good works and sociability or perhaps employment; and widowhood.

For those women who choose to pursue both marriage and a career, Cox reports that there is usually little awareness of clear-cut developmental stages and crises as in the other two groups. Instead, they experience life as a constant crisis. They are constantly feeling that there is not enough time in the day to do all they have to do, and feeling torn between the demands of home and job.

Transition from one developmental stage to another is almost always accompanied by stress, but such stress may or may not be of crisis proportions. If crisis is present, it may be the result of any or all of the following: (1) suddenness of the developmental transition; (2) multiple, simultaneous demands for personality change; and/or (3) the additive effect of residual unresolved conflicts from previous developmental stages. Other factors, such as fear of an impending life stage (e.g., marriage, becoming a parent, or old age and death), reluctance to leave a gratifying stage (e.g., graduation or retirement), the shock of unexpected developmental demands (e.g., a homemaker's liberation from the demands of parenting but with the loneliness and sound of an empty house), and cumulative erosion of psychic energy (e.g., one more bill to pay, another pregnancy, or one more job responsibility).

Within this developmental context of middle and later life, most common events (both developmental and non-developmental) which often precipitate crises are: (1) mid-life transition; (2) "empty nest" (mainly women); (3) approaching the end of reproductive years (mainly women); (4) loss of parents; (5) involuntary unemployment; (6) technological obsolescence; (7) retirement (voluntary or involuntary); (8) economic pressures; (9) declining health; (10) increasing dependency on others; and (11) loss of spouse and/or age-mates.

Change in people, whether for better or for worse, occurs most rapidly in a context of crisis. It might even be argued that the purpose of crisis is to facilitate change. As we have seen, crisis may be precipitated by developmental transitions, stressful life events, or both.

Crisis may be destructive to individuals if they are not ready for the next developmental event, if the outer circumstances of their life situations are not supportive, or if they have been depleted by prior ordeals. More often than not, however, crisis is constructive, and the individual emerges with enriched thinking and feeling. The effects of crisis can be softened and the likelihood of a constructive outcome maximized by advance preparation and planning, and by increased control over one's life. Job counselors can contribute substantially to this process by helping clients practice career planning and by increasing the degree of control they are able to exercise over their job search by improving their job-seeking skills.

HANDOUT

MID-LIFE CONCERNS: CRISES AND TRANSITIONS

Crisis may be defined as an unstable or crucial state of affairs, or an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life. More specifically, a crisis is the period of instability which accompanies change. It is that more or less unsettled and uncertain state in which people find themselves when they are in between two relatively stable states or conditions -- between jobs, for example; thus, crisis is the stress which accompanies transition or change. A crisis is always accompanied by stress, and too much stress can be destructive -- mentally, emotionally, and even physically.

According to Jung, the noted Swiss psychiatrist of the early 1900's, the first half of life for men is devoted to developing "masculine" characteristics necessary for mastery of the outer world -- getting a job, getting married, raising a family, and working one's way up in salary to achieve sufficient economic security to accomplish these goals. The second half of life is devoted to developing the neglected "feminine" aspects of personality, and at this time there is a strong tendency for men to become more passive, introspective, and attracted to people-oriented careers. On the other hand, the first half of life for women is passive, nurturing, devoted to feelings and to developing those "feminine" characteristics of homemaking, while the second half of life is devoted to developing their neglected "masculine" traits and mastery of self-in-the-world, which may include a job or some other kind of achievement-oriented activity.

A growing body of research is demonstrating that almost all adults pass through a progressive sequence of stages throughout their lives, and that stress and crisis in varying degrees inevitably accompany the transition from one stage to the next, especially the much-talked-about mid-life transition. Middle age normally represents one's years of fruition in terms of income, status, and influence. However, one becomes more and more aware of a sense of disquiet at being on a plateau; standing at the apex of one's achievements and not likely achieving anything greater during the remainder of one's life. Awareness of one's mortality often leads to excessive drinking or drug problems. At this point, some people consider a change in occupations, but usually feel that it is too late because retraining is too long and costly. During this stage people turn more and more towards humanistic values and serving others. They tend to place greater emotional investment in their families as they seek emotional reassurance from them. Retirement represents the final developmental stage with consequent loss of self-identity through occupation and a sudden increase in leisure time.

Transition from one developmental stage to another is almost always accompanied by stress, but such stress may or may not be of crisis proportions. If crisis is present, it may be the result of any or all of the following: (1) suddenness of the developmental transition; (2) multiple, simultaneous demands for personality change; and/or (3) the additive effect of residual unresolved conflicts from previous developmental stages. Other factors, such as fear of an impending life stage (e.g., marriage, becoming a parent, or old age and death), reluctance to leave a gratifying stage (e.g., graduation or retirement), the shock of unexpected developmental demands (e.g., a homemaker's liberation

from the demands of parenting but with the loneliness and sound of an empty house), and cumulative erosion of psychic energy (e.g., one more bill to pay, another pregnancy, or one more job responsibility).

Within this developmental context of middle and later life, most common events (both developmental and non-developmental) which often precipitate crises are: mid-life transition; "empty nest" (mainly women); approaching the end of reproductive years (mainly women); loss of parents; involuntary unemployment; technological obsolescence; retirement (voluntary or involuntary); economic pressures; declining health; increasing dependency on others; and loss of spouse and/or age-mates.

Change in people, whether for better or for worse, occurs most rapidly in a context of crisis. It might even be argued that the purpose of crisis is to facilitate change. As we have seen, crisis may be precipitated by developmental transitions, stressful life events, or both.

Crisis may be destructive to individuals if they are not ready for the next developmental event, or if they have been depleted by prior ordeals. More often than not, however, crisis is constructive, and the individual emerges with enriched thinking and feeling. The effects of crisis can be softened and the likelihood of a constructive outcome maximized by advance preparation and planning, as well as by increased control over one's life. Job counselors can contribute substantially to this process by helping clients practice career planning and by increasing the degree of control they are able to exercise over their job search by improving their job-seeking skills.

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QUESTIONS/STIMULI FOR DISCUSSION

Below are listed some life transitions. For each one, list at least five steps which could be taken in preparation for the event in order to "soften the blow" and increase one's control of the situation.

(1) death of spouse
(2) involuntary unemployment
(3) retirement

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

OBJECTIVES

1. To describe the basic concepts of helplessness as a learned condition.
2. To outline the negative effects of learned helplessness on human motivation, cognition, affect and self-esteem.
3. To suggest ways in which learned helplessness can be avoided or eliminated.
4. To show how learned helplessness can be used as a framework for discussing the problems of the older employment seeker.

MINI-LECTURE

The learned helplessness theory (developed by Seligman in 1975 and reformulated in 1978 by Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale) provides a framework for understanding depression in older people. Depression is the major psychological problem of the elderly and is often accompanied by lack of motivation. Depression can actually precipitate the onset of some diseases in the elderly, or hamper recovery from disease.

Learned helplessness results from repeated exposure to situations in which individuals have no perceived control--that regardless of their personal actions, the outcome will be the same. Treatment of learned helplessness depends on how the individual views the causes or attributes of his/her helpless situation. For example, are the causes internal ("my fault") or external (environmental, beyond the subject's control)? Are the causes global (everything is beyond control) or specific (one task is beyond control); or stable (the problem is here to stay) or unstable (the problem will pass)?

There are several negative consequences of learned helplessness on the elderly victim: (1) The individual is no longer motivated to take action since he/she believes it won't matter anyway; (2) One's cognitive abilities (including decision-making) decline, because the victim is no longer able to distinguish controlled responses when they do occur; (3) One's affective behavior may include hopelessness, loneliness, apathy, boredom, insomnia, irritability, and anxiety; (4) Loss of self-esteem may occur if individuals attribute themselves as the cause for their helplessness; coversely, if they perceive an external source as the reason for helplessness, there is no loss of self-esteem.

Central to the concept of learned helplessness are two key words: "perceived" and "learned". The theory applies because the elderly person believes he/she is helpless, regardless of whether or not that is the case. Also helplessness is learned based on an individual's behavior and the corresponding feedback; the more "perceived" negative feedback he/she receives, the more opportunities he/she has to "learn" to be helpless. Obviously, the older person, almost by definition, has accumulated more negative "learning" experiences. By virtue of age, the elderly are especially vulnerable. They have experienced numerous losses, includ-

ing such roles as worker (with its associated responsibilities and monetary benefits), parent or spouse. Physical losses and chronic disease abound in old age. With the loss of physical ability, money, and social resources, the foundation is already laid for learned helplessness.

It is important to realize that learned helplessness can be induced in the elderly by well-meaning practitioners. Their patronizing behaviors or stereotyping attitudes can foster dependency on the part of the elderly client. This is especially true if the person is already in a compromising situation--for example, in a hospital, or involved in an accident, or looking for a job.

The learned helplessness theory is not without its weaknesses. There is a lack of longitudinal data to support the theory, and most of the existing data have been collected in laboratory settings rather than in real-life situations. Also, learned helplessness is not universal; not all the elderly become helpless. Learned helplessness can be combated on several fronts. Most important is to increase the individual's perceived control, even if only in small matters, and to increase predictability of future events. This will increase independence. The other simultaneous approach is to educate practitioners who work with the elderly, so that they do not induce and increase learned helplessness in their clients.

With respect to the older job seeker, he/she must take control of the job search, interviews, resume writing, etc., and not become dependent on the employment counselor. He/she must realize helplessness does not have to be the norm. Past attributes of helplessness must be viewed as external, specific, and nonstable. Future encounters (interviews, for example) should be somewhat predictable and the older job seeker should assume a posture of independence.

HANDOUT

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS: THEORY AND APPLICATION

An individual's ability to manipulate and exert control over the surrounding environment is important to the maintenance of physical and emotional well-being. When a person is repeatedly exposed to events which are perceived as being beyond personal control, a psychological state of "helplessness" occurs. This resulting helplessness is, in effect, "learned" as individuals realize that their efforts to control the environment and the environment's "response" to these efforts are not related. They believe that regardless of their personal actions, the environmental outcome remains the same and therefore, they have no control of the situation.

For example, an elderly female tenant might make repeated attempts to have her landlord repair her apartment stove and after successive failure, exhibit the "giving up" behavior characteristic of learned helplessness. Such a person would have learned that her actions were having no effect on the environment. Because of the resulting feelings of loss of control, she would terminate her efforts to have the stove repaired (even if her landlord were legally obligated to take responsibility for such repairs) with possible negative consequences to her health and nutrition practices.

It is important to note that the primary criterion for the onset of learned helplessness is a <u>perceived</u> loss or lack of control. It can be avoided so long as individuals believe they can create an impact on the environment, even if they do not possess actual control.

For service providers dealing with elderly clients, the prevention of learned helplessness needs to be a priority. This is accomplished by increasing <u>perceived control</u> (i.e., the client takes a role in decision-making), and <u>increasing predictability</u> (i.e., what to expect on a job interview). In addition it is important for the worker <u>not</u> to harbor stereotypical attitudes about the elderly, but to appreciate the fact that most older persons are capable, competent, and fully functioning. Paternalistic or patronizing behavior on the part of the worker induces learned helplessness.

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QUESTIONS/STIMULI FOR DISCUSSION

Two ways to increase perceived control, and thus combat learned helplessness, are decision making by the individual and increased predictability. Mrs. B. is a 60-year-old disabled widow who lives alone and is homebound. She is continually frustrated by her helplessness in dealing with her landlord, Social Security office, the Food Stamp office, her doctor, the hospital where she recently underwent surgery, Spectran, her cat's veterinarian, etc. List ways in which she could "call the shots" by making decisions and increasing predictability.

MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES

OBJECTIVES

1. To delineate prevailing myths and stereotypes of the elderly.
2. To understand how myths and stereotypes contribute to ageism.
3. To understand how myths and stereotypes hinder the older job seeker.
4. To become aware of ways to dispel myths and stereotypes.

MINI-LECTURE

The most damaging myth (belief) about the elderly is that old people are all alike, which is totally untrue. The elderly are actually the most diverse age group and demonstrate vast heterogeneity. There appears to be no such thing as the typical experience of old age, nor the typical older person. Instead, the social, economic and psychological factors that affect individuals when they were younger stay with them throughout their lives. Older people share with each other their chronological age, but factors far more powerful than age alone determine the conditions of their later years; specifically, factors such as income, race, sex, and education.

The most extensive report concerning attitudes about the elderly was published in 1975, a Lou Harris poll entitled The Myth and Reality of Aging in America. In the Harris poll, various age groups under 65 as well as those over 65 were asked the same questions. It is interesting to note that younger adults (age 18-24) harbor the most negative attitudes toward the elderly. They, more than any other age group, fail to see the elderly as individuals. There exists a discrepancy between the way all adults (except the elderly themselves) expect old age to be, and the way older people experience their later years personally. In general, the public image of most older people is far more negative than that which the elderly hold of themselves as individuals.

In general, most respondents to the questionnaire from all age groups associated old age with bad health, financial problems, loneliness and boredom, unproductivity, and lack of involvement with other people. In contrast, most respondents over 65 reported no desire to be isolated and felt that one should be able to work as long as he/she wanted to. Many older people believed some of the myths and stereotypes of the elderly, but that they themselves were exceptions! Generally, low income and minority elderly were more negative in their attitudes about old age than other elderly respondents.

Myths and stereotypes (over-simplifications) about the elderly have been abundant throughout history in our culture. Not only has literature done a disservice to the elderly, but the media--with its coverage of the elderly poor, the elderly sick, the elderly institutionalized, and the elderly unemployed or or retired, may be protecting and reinforcing the distorted stereotypes of the elderly and the myths of old age. It is interesting to note, however, that the respondents in the Lou Harris poll, on the whole, were not critical of the

media for the way in which they project older people (although 10 - 20 percent of television watchers felt that T.V. makes older people look worse than they really are). The majority of television watchers pointed out that television features young people, not older people. This underscores the expression "age before beauty", implying that the two are mutually exclusive traits. In general, our society does not view the elderly as the beautiful people. There are plenty of older people portrayed on television, however, who are admired by the watching audience. Listed in order of popularity of "older people who are looked up to or admired" are Grandma and Grandpa Walton, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Robert Young, Buddy Ebsen (Barnaby Jones), Redd Foxx, John Wayne, Lawrence Welk, and a host of others.

On balance, the feeling of the public was that television, the medium which reaches the broadest audience, has so far had no discernible positive or negative effect on the way that the public views older people.

The greatest harm of myths and stereotypes is that they perpetrate ageism, or discrimination against the elderly. There are a number of common myths; most are negative, some are positive, but all are injurious to the elderly.

Some of the negative myths are as follow: The myth of unproductivity. It is presumed that at age 65 or thereabouts, one automatically becomes unproductive, so he or she disengages himself from society, seemingly preferring segregation from the rest of the world. As a matter of fact, this myth was even formulated into a sociological theory - the theory of disengagement - by Cummings and Henry in 1960-61 based on work they did in Kansas City. (In years since, they have modified their earlier position, although there was evidence to support their theory originally.) This myth of unproductivity has contributed to the practice of mandatory retirement. However, it is being dispelled by older people themselves who are living examples of productivity, creativity, and self-fulfillment. In addition, more and more legislation is appearing to abolish ageism.

Another myth is that of resistance to change. Older people have been thought to become more conservative and inflexible with increasing age. Where such conservatism has been observed, it is usually due to socio-economic constraints, not age. Actually there is evidence that older people become decreasingly conservative with increasing age, but society as a whole views the elderly as resistant to change despite the fact they've been adapting to change all their lives. The reality of the matter is that the elderly have to have been adaptable to have survived this long. They have lived through a fluctuating economy (including the Depression and periods of recession and inflation), lived through two world wars and survived a plethora of social changes. They have faced numerous crises such as death of spouse and peers, and empty nest syndrome, and loss of work and other roles, etc. So there is more adaptability and flexibility among older people than is recognized, and such adaptability is a function of life-long personality traits, not age.

There is the myth of senility, that is, that brain damage occurs as a function of age, and that most old people are institutionalized. Only about 2-3% of people between 65 and 75 years of age suffer from senile dementia, although the percentage increases after 75 years. Less than 8-10% of the elderly suffer from brain impairment, and in most cases it is reversible when the reason for the

impairment is diagnosed (such as drug interaction, fever, infection, etc.). The important thing to remember is that 80% of people over 75 years of age do not show signs of memory loss, confusion, disorientation, etc.

The myth of senility is being dispelled, especially among the old-old (those over 75), who represent a select group with regard to mental ability. There is a high positive correlation between I.Q. and longevity, i.e., persons who are more intelligent live longer.

The senility myth is being dispelled by the "young-old" as well, as they provide a model of meaningful activity. It has been predicted that in the next twenty years there will be more elderly people in colleges and universities than those who are recent high school graduates. Older people are already swelling the ranks of the volunteer force, traveling extensively, etc. Maintaining these roles (e.g., student, volunteer worker, etc.) is important in terms of identity, personal achievement, and maybe even financial and political power.

As for the myth of institutionalization, 5% or less of the elderly reside in long term care facilities, and that number could be reduced if adequate support systems (e.g., meals on wheels, transportation, etc.) were available.

Another myth concerns sex. Sexual activity is still appropriate among the elderly if they are in reasonably good health and have an available partner. Again it is an individualistic matter and depends on one's previous sexual patterns. A study of 100 people between the ages of 19 and 92 regarding their attitudes about sexual activity among different age groups revealed that most people felt that sex was least appropriate or not appropriate at all for individuals in the 54-92 age group (Teitelman, 1977).

Sex roles among the elderly are also stereotyped, i.e., the dirty old man and the little old lady in tennis shoes. Again, to some extent, these are self-fulfilling prophecies; they think they're supposed to play that role, so they do. This myth is being dispelled by the behavior of older men and women who are not playing the role.

There is the myth that people become more religious as they grow older. Religious activity, like sexual activity, is a function of previous involvement. If they were not religious people when they were younger, they won't become religious just because they are closer to death.

The major psychological problem of the elderly is depression often brought on by loneliness due to multiple losses. There is the myth that the elderly do not respond to psychotherapy. The elderly do respond to psychotherapy, however, sometimes better than younger people.

Elderly people are thought to be dependent on their children and the government for money and services. In many cases where the elderly parent lives with the child, it is the parent's house and resources that are being used, although the elderly parent may in fact not be able to live alone. However, the more independent the elderly person can be, the better off everyone is. In many cases, it is the middle-aged child with the bleeding heart who fosters the dependency of the older parent, especially if that parent lives in the same household. As for being on welfare, many of the elderly were financially independent until they were retired, and the retirement may have been forced. Adult children and service providers should maintain the role of facilitators, not benefactors.

Older people are sometimes thought of as being stingy. One must remember that they survived the Depression and also were conditioned to frugality, which was a virtue. Usually older people have to be thrifty, considering that for most retirees, their income is approximately half what it was when they were working. On the other hand, affluent elderly tend to be quite generous, especially if there is a tax advantage.

There is the myth that the elderly go through second childhood. The "old-old" do tend to experience a life review, in which they remember important events in their life, especially as they grow closer to death. If childish behavior is observed, it is probably the response which the elderly person feels is appropriate based on the messages he or she receives from relatives and service providers.

Myths and stereotypes about older workers abound. Older workers are viewed as not dependable, not productive, and not adaptable, despite the fact that many studies have indicated that you can teach an old dog new tricks if the old dog wants to learn new tricks, and if the pressure of time is reduced. Even though it may take the older person longer to learn something new, he or she may learn it better and retain it longer than younger persons. Government reports reveal that older workers have less absenteeism and fewer accidents than younger workers. However, despite all these positive findings, older people have bought in that same market that values youth more than maturity and quantity more than quality.

There are also positive stereotypes that depict the elderly in a more favorable light than is realistic, but again the same underlying myth--that all old people are alike--is the culprit. We hear about the golden years of senior citizens, that is, a stereotype that they are older and wiser; even among those who really are "older and wiser", the kind of wisdom they have may not be valued in today's technological society. The last years are thought of as being serene and tranquil, when really the underlying condition may be depression. The retirement years can be a time of constant leisure, but not all the elderly really want or need that much discretionary time.

The reality of the matter is that, in the eyes of the public, older Americans today represent a more independent and resourceful group than did older Americans ten, twenty or thirty years ago. As a group, people over 65 are seen as a healthier, better educated, better off financially, and larger segment of the population today than they were in the 1950's or 1960's. Furthermore, the public recognizes that older people today can expect to enjoy greater longevity than older people in the past, and, according to a majority of the public surveyed, are more likely now than they were then to live out that longer life in their own homes.

So the image of the elderly has improved over the last two to three decades, but it still has a long way to go. Myths and stereotypes must be dispelled because they contribute to ageism (discrimination on the basis of age), which is a particular handicap to the older job seeker. Secondly, the quality of care received by the elderly is less than satisfactory if administered by practitioners who are biased by myths and stereotypes. Third, younger people are apprehensive about old age because of stereotypes. And lastly, the potential of the elderly is stifled if they, too, have bought into this myth which places little value on old age.

In efforts to dispel the erroneous beliefs about the elderly, television appears to be the medium that will reach the largest proportion of each group. "Because the public's exposure to older persons is potentially more frequent and diversified on television than in real life, it is likely that television could ameliorate misunderstandings faster than the population itself" (Harris, 1976, P. 205).

Myths and stereotypes about the elderly can also be dispelled through education about life span psychology, beginning in elementary school and extending through graduate and medical schools, as well as in continuing education and other less formal classes. (It is interesting to note that female medical interns and residents were among the most biased individuals concerning their attitudes toward elderly patients.)

And finally, some of the present elderly and even more of the future elderly will be better educated and more resourceful themselves, have more economic clout, and may choose to exercise their political prowess.

HANDOUT

MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES

According to a 1975 Harris poll, all age groups associate old age with bad health, financial problems, loneliness and boredom, unproductivity, and lack of involvement with other people. The reality of the matter is that these problems may be associated with old age; however, they are not a function of old age alone but in combination with other factors such as income, race, sex, and education.

Myths (beliefs) and stereotypes (oversimplifications) about the elderly are, for the most part, negative, but some are positive; however, all are injurious to the elderly.

Some common myths and realities are as follow:

Myth: Old people are all alike.
Reality: The elderly are actually the most diverse age group; social, economic, and psychological influences follow individuals throughout their lives.

Myth: Old people are unproductive and want to retire from work and segregate themselves from society.
Reality: Past practices of mandatory retirement have forced many capable, willing workers out of jobs, and in more subtle ways, alienated older people.

Myth: Old people are resistant to change.
Reality: Adaptability is a function of life-long personality traits, not age.

Myth: Most old people are senile and institutionalized.
Reality: Eighty percent of people over 75 show no signs of memory loss, confusion, or disorientation, and less than 5% are institutionalized.

Myth: Old people are not interested in sex.
Reality: Sexual activity is appropriate in the elderly if they are in reasonably good health and have an available partner.

Myth: People become more religious as they grow older.
Reality: Religious activity is a function of previous involvement and life-long patterns.

Myth: Old people do not respond to psychotherapy.
Reality: The elderly do respond to psychotherapy, sometimes better than younger people.

Myth: Old people are stingy.
Reality: Retired people often have to be thrifty, since retirement income, in most cases, is about half their pre-retirement income.

Myth: Older workers are not as dependable, productive, and adaptable as younger workers.
Reality: If an older worker wants to learn and if the pressure of time is removed, then the older worker will probably learn better and retain longer than younger persons. Statistics reveal that older workers have less absenteeism and fewer accidents.

Myth: Old people are "older and wiser".
Reality: Even among those who do appear wiser, their experiences may not be valued in today's technological society.

Myth: The "golden years" are serene and tranquil.
Reality: Such "tranquility" may be depression, the number one mental health problem of the elderly.

Older Americans today represent a more independent and resourceful group than did older Americans ten, twenty or thirty years ago. As a group, people over 65 are healthier, better educated, better off financially, and comprise a larger segment of the population today than ever before. Furthermore, older people today can expect to enjoy greater longevity than older people in the past, and are more likely now than they were then to live out that longer life in their own homes.

The image of the elderly has improved over the last two to three decades, but it still has a long way to go. Myths and stereotypes must be dispelled because they contribute to ageism (discrimination on the basis of age), which is a particular handicap to the older job seeker. Secondly, the quality of care received by the elderly is less than satisfactory if administered by practitioners who are biased by myths and stereotypes. Third, younger people are apprehensive about old age because of stereotypes. And lastly, the potential of the elderly is stifled if they, too, have bought in the same market that places little value on old age.

In efforts to dispel the erroneous beliefs about the elderly, the Harris poll reports that television appears to be the medium that will reach the largest number of people, so it is essential that television shows depict older people accurately. Secondly, education about life span psychology, beginning in elementary school and extending throughout one's lifetime, is important. And finally, some of the present elderly and even more of the future elderly will be better educated and more resourceful themselves, have more economic clout, and may choose to exercise their political prowess.

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QUESTIONS/STIMULI FOR DISCUSSION

There are nine negative myths about the elderly listed in the handout. Consider five of them; if these myths are erroneous, how do you think they got started in the first place? There must be some basis for these beliefs. Think of some elderly people you know. Do they display some of these "old" behaviors? Is there any basis for such behavior, or do you think they are acting that way because they think they're "supposed to"?

ECONOMICS OF AGING

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine current trends in the national economy.
2. To become aware of the impact of the elderly on the economy.
3. To become aware of the impact of the economy on the elderly, both now and in the future.
4. To examine major federal programs for income support of the elderly.

MINI-LECTURE

The following events have taken place recently and, for the most part, have been unprecendented in the 200 year history of our country.

Inflation in the United States has been almost as high as 20%, prompting President Carter to call for a balanced budget by 1981 and a program to curb inflation. There is good reason for such a program; if inflation were left unchecked at its present rate, consumer prices would double in only a few years.

The Kiplinger Newsletter estimates that inflation will not drop below 10% through 1985. The prime lending rate has reached an all time high of 20%. The gold and silver markets have shown wild fluctuations. Other long range problems that affect the national economy include coping with non-renewable energy sources, pollution, and a sharply decreasing rate of growth in GNP and disposable income. Part of the worldwide economic picture is the gross inequity in the distribution of resources. As other countries are developing and emerging, there will be more pressure to share the wealth.

Added to the list of factors that affect the national economy is that of the increasing elderly population. In the past, economists studying the elderly focused on their relatively poor economic status and the problems of social security. Now the picture is further complicated by other major issues, such as:

(1) The demographic shifts within the age structure, i.e., the increase in the elderly minority (now 11.3% and growing). Growth of the group will be less rapid during the next 30 years, but will rise more sharply in the 21st century when the post WWII baby boom reaches "retirement age".

(2) Employment problems of older workers such as age discrimination, rapid technological change leaving obsolescent skills in its wake, and frequent geographic shifts of companies;

(3) The financial consequences of early retirement;

(4) The impact of inflation and the development of appropriate indexing mechanisms for social security; and

(5) The problem of adequate health care delivery, to name but a few.

The economics of aging should be considered as a field for continuing education, as changes are occurring all the time.

According to economist James Schulz, there are several broad areas of study which must be included in the economics of aging, one of them being trends in middle-age retirement and older worker employment. Such trends include retiring earlier than the traditional age and women entering the work force who never previously worked for pay. There are middle-aged people changing careers. There are retirees who are returning to the work force on either a part-time or full-time basis.

Another area of study is the adequacy, sources, and levels of income. For example, it makes a big difference if a retired person has income only from social security, or if he or she has other sources of income from pensions or private investments. The bottom line is whether the amount of income is adequate to maintain the quality of life as it was experienced prior to retirement. Of course, consumption patterns are different in retirement; presumably one doesn't spend as much money in retirement (children grown, house and car paid for, etc.), plus there are benefits such as Medicare, property tax relief, senior discounts, and for the very needy, Medicaid, food stamps, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which would mean that less money is required. The major federal programs for income support of the elderly are Social Security, Medicare, and SSI.

Social Security has been constantly changing, and will continue to do so. Social Security was enacted in 1935 and the first payments made in 1940. At first it covered only retirement, and was initiated to free up some jobs as one solution to the massive unemployment created by the Depression. In 1939 it was expanded to include the survivors of the worker after his death, and in 1957 coverage was extended to include the disabled. Medicare was put into effect in 1965, and in 1972, Social Security payments were indexed to cost of living, making it the most inflation proof income available today. As of 1979, two (2) formulas were put into use for figuring benefits, with the recipient getting the larger of the two.

In its simplest form, Social Security represents a system by which working people and their employers put an equal percentage into the system while they are working which is then used to provide continuous income to those who are not working.

Both the rates and the maximum amount of income to be taxed are scheduled to increase as follows:

	Maximum Income to be Taxed	Tax Rate	
		Employee and Employer	Self Employed
1980	$24,900	6.13%	8.10%
1987	$42,600	7.15%	10.0%

The amount of payment is based on one's work history: for some it can be as little as one and a half years and never needs to be more than 10 years. The dollar amount received is based on past earnings. One can start drawing Social Security at age 62, but that will result in reduced earnings. Although there are gross inequities in the system, and there is a move underway to rectify those inequities.

Medicare is a part of Social Security which provides fairly comprehensive health coverage for those over 65. Part A is free and covers hospital bills. Part B is optional and pays doctor bills and outpatient services for a modest premium. If one is eligible for Social Security, he is eligible for Medicare. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) was designed to provide a minimum amount of money to the very needy who are over 65, disabled, or blind. About 90% of all workers are covered by Social Security, but for those who are not, and might otherwise be destitute, there is SSI.

Anyone who is eligible for SSI is probably also eligible for Medicaid, which is a State Program that pays for medical and hospital charges that would not be covered by Medicare (such as dental work, eyeglasses, and prescription drugs). SSI is not related to one's work history, and one can be currently working and receiving Social Security if income does not exceed a certain dollar amount. Like Social Security, SSI is indexed to the cost of living. SSI is administered by the Social Security Administration, but payments come from the general revenues, not Social Security contributions.

To summarize:

1. During the last decade, the economic status of the elderly has improved tremendously. Social Security benefits have increased more than 100% since the system was indexed to the cost of living. Most private pensions do not have that kind of protection against inflations.

2. Retirement income amounts to about half of what one received while working (for most people). However, about 65-80% of pre-retirement income is necessary not to suffer a decline in quality of life--hence reinforcing the need for supplemental income from private pensions, personal investments, or part-time work.

3. The life expectancy has increased by several years since the inception of Social Security. It is possible to spend one-fourth of one's life in retirement, again underlying the need for personal planning ahead of time. As for the future, new ways of funding and financing the Social Security system will have to be explored.

In terms of planning for retirement in the '80's or '90's, or into the 21st century, the need to supplement retirement income will be a priority for almost everyone.

HANDOUT

THE ECONOMICS OF AGING

Unprecedented fluctuations in the economy and rampant inflation represent financial problems for most Americans, especially the elderly. They are a rapidly growing minority who are living longer and having to cope with problems related to employment, retirement, or both. Statistics indicate it takes almost twice as long for older job seekers to become employed; however, early retirement (even if desired) may be a financial fiasco.

The key to understanding the economics of aging is knowledge of the public and private pension systems and whether they are adequate. The major federal income support system for the elderly is Social Security. It is based on one's work history and the contributions paid by employees and their employers. New ways of funding the Social Security System are being explored because of the impact of early retirement and increased longevity which result in more payments. Inequities in the system are under study to improve benefits to those presently discriminated against.

During the past decade, benefits have increased more than 100% after the program was indexed to the cost of living. Social Security also includes health care coverage--Medicare--of which Part A (hospital coverage) is free, and Part B (physicians and outpatient expenses) is available at a modest cost.

Supplemental Security Income is a federal relief program for the near-indigents. It is administered by the Social Security Administration, but payments come from general revenues, not Social Security contributions.

Retirement income for most Americans is about half their pre-retirement income, and for about a quarter of the nation's retirees, that is not enough to maintain their standard of living. Thus, some retirees are going back to work, at least part-time. Other would-be retirees are staying on the job. Competition for jobs comes also from women who have never worked before and middle-aged people who are changing careers. Although there are many reasons for the changing work/retirement patterns, probably the need for money is the primary motive in most cases.

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QUESTIONS/STIMULI FOR DISCUSSION

Think about your current annual salary and your current life-style. Suppose your income were cut in half (as it is for most retirees). Could you maintain your present life-style? Probably not. What are your priorities? What expenses could you eliminate? What changes would you have to make? Would you seek a way to increase your income? After you've worked out a method of coping on half your salary, the last question is: could you maintain the quality of life you require to be happy?

LEGAL ASPECTS OF EMPLOYMENT: ADEA AND AGE DISCRIMINATION

OBJECTIVES

1. To become aware of general legal issues in employment.
2. To become aware of specific legal issues of the older job seeker (A.D.E.A.).
3. To know the appropriate agencies for handling discrimination grievances.

MINI-LECTURE

Congress enacted the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) in 1967. The purpose of this legislation is to promote the employment of older persons based on their ability rather than their age. The ADEA, as amended in 1978, prohibits arbitrary age discrimination in employment regarding people who are 40 to 70 years of age. A study is in progress to determine if the upper age limit can be eliminated entirely, as has already been done for federal employees. Specifically, it is unlawful for an employer to refuse to hire, fail to promote, or fire any individual solely because of his/her age. In addition, an employer cannot segregate older workers, or reduce their wage rate.

It is also unlawful for an employment agency to fail to refer an individual or to classify him/her because of age.

It is unlawful for a labor organization to exclude or expel any individual because of his/her age; or to classify or segregate because of age.

It is unlawful for any of the above to utilize printed matter indicating preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination, based on age.

Exceptions apply where age is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the business, or where age is a term in bona fide retirement and insurance plans. (The existence of such plans, however, does not excuse failure to hire an individual due to age.)

Certain high level positions are exempted from ADEA--for example, tenured college professors and top-level executives whose salaries are $65,000 or more per year.

The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures were issued jointly by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Labor, and became effective on September 25, 1978. In essence, the Guidelines describe the steps which much be followed to ensure that selection procedures do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; however, neither age nor handicap discrimination is covered by the Guidelines.

An individual aged 40 to 70 who believes that he or she has been discriminated against because of age should contact the agency which has power to enforce the ADEA upon that person's employer (or the employer to which that person applies for a job).

To file an age discrimination complaint regarding employment by the State of Virginia, one should contact the Virginia State Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office. The EEO Office will conduct formal investigations of age discrimination complaints. The EEO Office may be reacned as follows:

Equal Employment Opportunity Office
P. O. Box 654
Richmond, VA 23205
(804)786-7546

One may also file a charge against the State within 180 days after the alleged unlawful practice occurred, to:

Secretary
U. S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division
Room 7000, Federal Building
400 N. 8th Street
Richmond, VA 23240
(804)782-2995

or

Secretary
U. S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division
Room 457, Poff Federal Building
210 Franklin Road, S.W.
Roanoke, VA 24011
(703)982-6331

To file an age discrimination complaint regarding employment with a private employer in Virginia, one should file a charge with the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Labor at one of the two addresses above. Such charges must be filed within 180 days after the alleged unlawful practice occurred. The ADEA requires that the Secretary, upon receipt of a charge, attempt to eliminate the discrimination alleged, and effect voluntary compliance with the requirements of the act through informal methods of conciliation, conference, and persuasion.

For more information about ADEA, consult public law 90-202 or the Virginia EEO Office (address above).

HANDOUT #1

LEGAL ASPECTS OF EMPLOYMENT: ADEA AND AGE DISCRIMINATION

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, amended in 1978, prohibits arbitrary age discrimination in employment regarding people who are between 40 and 70 years old. It is unlawful for an employer to refuse to hire, fail to promote, or to fire any individual solely because of his/her age. Nor can an employer segregate older workers or reduce their wage rate. There are some exceptions to the protection which ADEA provides: to jobs where age is a bona fide occupational qualification; to tenured college professors; and to high-salaried executives. Employment agencies and labor organizations are also prohibited from age discriminatory practices under A.D.E.A.

The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures became effective in 1978 and prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; however neither age nor handicap is covered by the Guidelines.

For more information about ADEA or filing discrimination complaints against either a state or private employer, one should contact the following:

Equal Employment Opportunity Office
P. O. Box 654
Richmond, VA 23205
(804)786-7546

HANDOUT #2

ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How old are you?

2. What church or synagogue do you go to?

3. What kind of work does your father (brothers, sisters, husband, wife, etc.) do?

4. Are you a member of the NAACP?

5. What political party are you registered in?

6. Did you have trouble with the police as a youngster?

7. What are the names of the organizations you belong to?

8. Are you a citizen of the United States?

9. Did you ever march in a Civil Rights parade?

10. What means of transportation will you use to come to work?

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QUESTIONS/STIMULI FOR DISCUSSION

Divide the group into small groups (3 to 5 people) and give each person a copy of "Illegal Employment Interview Questions". Give the groups a few minutes in which to read the questions and to develop a scenario in which the interviewer sandwiches a few illegal questions into the interview. The task is for each group to develop possible responses to be made by the interviewee who is aware that the questions are improper but does not wish to jeopardize the interview. After 5-10 minutes, the whole group reconvenes and shares their responses.

MARKETING THE OLDER JOB SEEKER:
THE ROLES OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR AND CLIENT

OBJECTIVES

1. To learn how to apply marketing principles to enhance placement of clients, especially older job seekers.

2. To develop assertiveness and competence in the client to take control of his or her career management program.

3. To develop more effective strategies in job development and in working with potential employers.

MINI-LECTURE

The Role of the Employment Counselor

Good employment counselors develop their interpersonal skills and career management competency in order to develop rapport with clients and help them to focus on and implement their goals. Once the counselor has a handle on the kinds of jobs that would be appropriate for the client, he or she has a marketing or selling job to do with the potential employer. The quality of selling is even more important when the counselor's job involves job development based on a particular client.

Employment counselor "salespersons" must first sell themselves and their credibility to potential employers; then they must market their clients.

The goal of the counselor-turned-salesperson is to get an interview set up for the client. To reach that goal, the following steps are suggested in the initial approach to a potential employer.

The first step is to develop rapport with the employer. First impressions are important; appropriate attire, good body language, sincerity, openness, honesty, and friendliness help to break the ice. "Small talk" (e.g., the weather, traffic) is a necessary beginning before getting to more substantial matters. The counselor should understand the employer's needs and be empathic to his concerns. Unless this level of communication is attained, the employer's attention may not really be focused, and the setting will not be right to present the qualities of the prospective job seeker.

In presenting the client, the counselor should first employ positive global terms which describe the job seeker -- i.e., provide a "word picture" such as enthusiastic, trainable, personable, etc. The description should be accurate and realistic, but related to the needs of the employer. The counselor must sense when the employer is sufficiently receptive to go into specifics about the client -- past job experiences, achievements, awards, abilities, recommendations, and observations on the part of the counselor as to why this particular individual is worthy of an interview. The more creative the presentation on the part of the

counselor, the more interested the employer is likely to be in the "product". In order for counselors to accurately represent clients, they must have done their "homework" and have all the factual data assembled as well as a personal evaluation of the client's strengths and abilities. This relates to the necessity for good interpersonal skills and relationship building in order to "bring out" the assets and liabilities of the client. It is as important to ascertain the client's weaknesses as his or her strengths; one would not wish to place a reformed alcoholic in an A.B.C. store even though he or she might be terrific in dealing with customers! Placements which don't work out benefit no one; usually inappropriate placements can be avoided by a skilled counselor.

The counselor is the "middle person" who knows the needs of the employer and the marketable skills of the job seeker. When he or she perceives an appropriate match, he or she should be able to articulate the potential advantages of the employee, overcome any objections the employer might voice, and be assertive in setting up an interview. Closure of the conversation should be accomplished with appreciation for the forthcoming interview.

Counselors must often set their own goals (i.e., number of interviews with potential employers/week) and monitor their accomplishments (i.e., number of client interviews per week). This is one task which becomes easier with practice.

The Role of the Client

The client needs to take the initiative in his or her own life planning and specifically career management. This concept is important not only for getting a job but also impacts on one's mental health. Many job seekers, however, must be educated to this kind of thinking; they expect the employment counselor to "find me a job" and feel that getting a job is beyond their control. Older job seekers in particular may have feelings of helplessness and inadequacy and lean heavily on the counselor.

Initially it may be necessary for the employment counselor to take the lead in establishing a working relationship and in educating and encouraging the client, but the client should gradually become more independent and more goal-oriented. Ultimately, the client must become more assertive -- especially in interviews.

The manner in which clients represent themselves in job interviews is crucial. They should of course be on time and dressed appropriately. The goal of interviewees is to decide if they want to work there, and if so, to "sell" themselves. Major "first impressions" are formed during the first few minutes of the interview, and interviewers tend to single out unfavorable "messages" they receive from the client, whether they be verbal or nonverbal. Traits which interviewers tend to look for in a prospective employee are the ability to communicate, self-confidence, maturity, enthusiasm, and motivation. These traits must come across both nonverbally and verbally or the interviewer will receive a "mixed message" and remain "unsold" on the job seeker.

Prior to the crucial interview, job seekers must prepare themselves in several ways. First they must research the company and the position for which they are applying by obtaining printed matter (annual reports, brochures, etc.) as well as interviewing a person who is already employed by the company. It is most helpful to ask questions of an employee who holds the same position for which one is applying. With this kind of background information, an interviewee can ask specific substantive questions which will convey his or her interest in the company.

Secondly, the client should know what to expect in an interview and then rehearse his or her performance. There are basically four parts of an interview: (1) breaking the ice; (2) general information sharing; (3) specific questioning; and (4) closure (McGovern, 1978).

The ice-breaking phase would appear to be a trivial matter, but these first few minutes can make or break the client's chances. There is a real art to making small talk. Because the content is inane and requires no concentration, it gives each party the freedom to concentrate on the other person, not his or her conversation. As stated before, nonverbal behavior (gestures, posture, facial expression, etc.) is just as critical as is appropriate attire and other grooming features.

From small talk, the conversation advances to general sharing of information by both parties -- what the company is looking for and what the job seeker is looking for. It is most important that the interviewee listen to what the interviewer is saying, as well as to talk about himself or herself. Interviewees should not bring up personal problems or how badly they need a job. If both parties are still interested, the conversation advances to specific considerations. Here is the job seeker's chance to shine: if he or she has researched the company and position, he or she can display himself or herself in the best possible light -- by focusing attention on abilities and skills that are important to the company. Here the job seeker can drop the big bombshells -- refer to any distinguishing characteristics which separate him or her from the rest of the applicants. Job seekers should use "I" statements and even be a little pushy; this may be their only opportunity to promote themselves so they should not let it pass unnoticed. In essence, they tell the interviewer what he or she wants to hear rather than enumerating every accomplishment they can think of, which only serves to distract the listener from the main selling points. Most interviewees cannot "think on their feet" well enough to relate all the favorable ways in which they can impact the job under consideration, but if they've already researched the job, then they can anticipate the questions and have a ready reply. This kind of preparation facilitates communication, self-confidence, maturity, enthusiasm, and motivation -- the main qualities employers are looking for.

Interviewees should be ready with the following information: a realistic salary expectation; answers to questions about health, age, and family (see Difficult Interview Questions); why they left (or want to leave) their previous (or current) job; willingness to travel or work overtime; necessary information to fill out applications, including dates of past employment and names and addresses of references. They should also be prepared to take aptitude or performance tests.

Closure is usually initiated by the interviewer, but the prospective employee should feel comfortable that all questions have been answered before leaving. He or she should verbally thank the employer for the interview at the time, as well as follow-up with a written thank-you note shortly thereafter.

The interview process sounds benign enough. Many applicants, however, "freeze", stammer, become nervous, or in some way fail to present themselves as favorably as possible. It takes practice to do it well. It is especially helpful in developing self-confidence for counselor and client to role play an interview. Then the counselor can give specific feedback.

To summarize, in a good relationship, both job seeker and employment counselor work together, (1) to help the client take control of his or her career plan; (2) to evaluate the client's skills and abilities and to market them effectively; (3) to conduct a field survey of companies and positions; (4) to become aware of the qualities interviewers look for in an employee; and (5) to rehearse job interviews.

In addition to coaching the client, the counselor will have opportunities to deal directly with potential employers. His or her "selling" ability may make the difference in whether or not the client is granted an interview.

HANDOUT #1

MARKETING THE OLDER JOB SEEKER: THE ROLES OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR AND CLIENT

In a good relationship, both job seeker and employment counselor work together, (1) to help the client take control of his or her career plan; (2) to evaluate the client's skills and abilities and to market them effectively; (3) to conduct a field survey of companies and positions; (4) to become aware of the qualities interviewers look for in an employee; and (5) to rehearse job interviews.

The role of employment counselors is that of a salesperson. They must sell themselves and their credibility to potential employers; then they must market their clients. The goal of the counselor-turned-salesperson is to get an interview set up for the client. To do so, he or she must establish rapport and be empathic to the concerns of the employer before "marketing" the client. The more creative the presentation, the more interested the "buyer" is likely to be in the "product", so the presentation must be both accurate and realistic. The counselor is the "middle person" who knows the needs of the employer and the marketable skills of the job seeker. Placements which don't work out benefit no one; usually inappropriate placements can be avoided by a skilled counselor.

The role of the client is to take control of his or her own life and career management plan. Often clients must be taught how to do so.

Initially it may be necessary for the employment counselor to take the lead in establishing a working relationship and educating and encouraging the client, but the client should gradually become more independent and more goal-oriented. Ultimately, the client must become more assertive -- especially in interviews.

Prior to the initial interview, job seekers must prepare themselves in several ways. First they must research the company and the position for which they're applying by obtaining printed matter (annual reports, brochures, etc.) as well as interviewing a person who is already employed by the company. It is most helpful to ask questions of an employee who holds the same position for which one is applying. With this kind of background information, an interviewee can ask specific substantive questions which will convey his or her interest in the company. Secondly, he or she should have ready specific information; a realistic salary expectation; answers to difficult questions (see "Difficult Interview Questions"); and names, dates, and other information to fill out applications. Interviewees should also be prepared to take aptitude or performance tests.

Third, the manner in which clients represent themselves in the job interview is crucial. Major "first impressions" are formed during the first four minutes of the interview, and interviewers tend to single out unfavorable "messages," both verbal and nonverbal, that they receive from the client. Being on time, appropriately attired, and well groomed are traits which may be as important to an interviewer as communication skills, self-confidence, maturity, enthusiasm, and motivation.

Fourth, the job seeker should know the format of an interview (breaking the ice, general information sharing, specific questioning and closure) and rehearse possible interviews with the counselor.

The interview process sounds benign enough. Many applicants, however, "freeze", stammer, become nervous or in some way fail to present themselves as favorably as possible. It takes practice to do it well. It is especially helpful for counselor and client to role play an interview. Then the counselor can give specific feedback.

HANDOUT #2

DIFFICULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. You seem to have had quite a few jobs. Can you explain why there's been so much change? (Interviewer really means that you look like a job-hopper, and that you'd better have a good explanation.)

2. With the kind of experience you've had, wouldn't this job bore you? (Interviewer probably thinks you are over-qualified, and may just want to use this job as a temporary stop-gap until something better comes along.)

3. Have you had any experience in this kind of work? (A less direct, but similar question to the one above.)

4. Have you ever been fired or quit a job? Please explain. (Interviewer is looking for clues to serious problems or job difficulties which might carry over.)

5. Why haven't you worked recently? (A less direct, but similar question to the one above.)

6. Do you have any health problems? (Interviewer wants to know if you have had heart trouble, mental illness, alcoholism, or other health problem which might cause work problems.)

7. Have you ever had any serious illness or injuries? (Less direct, but same basic question as above. You don't have to go into your whole health history for the interviewer.)

8. What kinds of people rub you the wrong way? (Interviewer really wants to know how you relate to other people.)

9. What do you know about our company? (Interviewer is really trying to find out how interested you are, and whether you were motivated enough to try to find out something about the company.)

10. Why are you interested in this job? (Again, a question about motivation; are you really interested in the job, or just willing to take anything you can get.)

11. Are you collecting any retirement, pension, or disability payments? (Interviewer really wants to know if you need money enough to really be willing to work, or if you are so desperate for money that you'll jump at anything whether you can do it or not.)

12. How will you get to work? Do you have a car? (Interviewer really wants to know if you will take the responsibility for getting to work regularly and on time.)

13. What would you do if a co-worker said you shouldn't have been hired because of your age? (Interviewer may think you are too old for the job; also, may be interested in how you get along with difficult co-workers.)

14. We're a fast-paced outfit. Do you find that you have trouble keeping up these days? (Another question about whether you may be too old.)

15. How did your past employers treat you? (Interviewer is really interested in how loyal you will be; if you "bad-mouth" any previous employers, you may carry grudges and may not be loyal to a new employer.)

16. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? (Interviewer wants to know if you have confidence in yourself; also whether you are honest enough with yourself to know your weaknesses. It is important here, in describing weaknesses, to turn them around so that they are really strengths.)

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QUESTIONS/STIMULI FOR DISCUSSION

Divide the group into triads and give each person a copy of "Difficult Interview Questions". Give the group a few minutes in which to read the questions and to develop an interview role play, with one being the interviewer, the second being the interviewee, and the third an observer. Then allow about five minutes for the role play interview, followed by a couple of minutes for feedback from the observer. If time permits, allow one or two of the "interviews" to be played for the entire group, with the entire group acting as observers and then giving feedback.

AVAILABILITY OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS

OBJECTIVES

1. To become aware of various employment programs for the elderly throughout the state.

2. To facilitate dialogue and cooperation among employment agencies in the local community to promote more extensive older worker placement.

3. To better understand the concept of hiring older people to be employment counselors for older job seekers.

MINI-LECTURE

The older job seeker (OJS) follows the stepping-stone Career Management Plan (see Chapter V, B) just as the younger job seeker does. Because of the special needs of OJS's and because of barriers to employment of older people, counselors of OJS's must be aware of additional programs and resources that can be of help to their older clients.

In Virginia there are six kinds of services that exist in certain areas throughout the state, and each will be described here.

1. The Virginia Employment Commission.

Through the Employment Service Division and local offices, the V.E.C. administers the Older Worker Specialist Program. This program is mandated by the U.S. Employment Service and requires each full-service local office to designate a staff person as Older Worker Specialist. It is this person's responsibility to work with employers in the community, to plan and participate in seminars, and to work with local office staff in job development, referral, and placement of older workers. Older worker applicants have access to all the services of the VEC including testing, counseling and referral to other supportive services, and job placement.

The V.E.C. also sponsors special projects, such as Hire-a-Senior in Danville and R.E.N.E.W. (Referral/Employment Network for Elderly Workers) in the Southside and Tidewater regions. The distinctive feature of these programs is that each of the employment counselors is an older worker. To be eligible to work as a counselor in either of these programs, one must meet age and income requirements. The advantage of using older workers as counselors is that they themselves are highly motivated and sensitive to the psychological, social, and economic needs of their counselees, while being aware of their liabilities (for example, physical limitations, lack of appropriate work history, etc.). The older counselor can more easily establish rapport since he or she has gone the same job-hunting route. Because of their empathy, older counselors are extremely motivated to develop jobs for their peers.

The V.E.C. also sponsors annually "National Employ the Older Worker Week" during March to demonstrate the benefits of employing older workers.

For information concerning the location of local V.E.C. offices with older worker specialists, contact:

Special Applicant Services, Virginia Employment Commission
P. O. Box 1358
Richmond, VA 23211
(804)786-4094

2. Title V, Older Americans Act, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

There are eight national organizations that participate in the SCSEP: Green Thumb, Inc. (a subsidiary of the National Farmers Union), the National Council on Aging (NCOA), the National Retired Teachers Association/American Association of Retired Persons (NRTA/AARP), the U. S. Forest Service, the National Urban League, the National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSC), the National Association for Spanish-Speaking Elderly, and the National Center for the Black Aged (NCBA). Only the first five of the organizations listed above sponsor programs in Virginia, in addition to a state-sponsored program which is administered through the State Office on Aging. The programs are very similar in nature, with the same goal of providing subsidized, part-time employment in community service work, for low-income persons 55 or older; however, they do vary slightly. Each of the programs is described below:

a) State-sponsored SCSEP - This program is administered through the Virginia Office on Aging (VOA), and is funded directly through the Department of Labor (DOL). Virginia received $731,000 in federal funds from DOL in fiscal year (FY) 1979 to fund 212 slots. Locally the program is administered by Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's). Further information and a listing of the AAA's can be obtained from:

Virginia Office on Aging
830 E. Main Street, Suite 950
Richmond, VA 23219
(804)786-7894

The national address is:

United States Department of Labor
Office of National Programs
Employment and Training Administration
601 D Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20210
(202)396-6232

b) NCOA-sponsored SCSEP- This program is also administered by the VOA, but the funds are provided by the NCOA to VOA. This program is administered in conjunction with the State-sponsored program (see a), and is also locally administered by the AAA's. It is also referred to as the Senior Community Service Project (SCSP). In FY 1979, $413,000 were provided to fund 100 slots. For more information on this program, contact VOA at the above address.

The national address is:

National Council on Aging
1828 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036
(202)223-6250

c) NRTA/AARP-sponsored SCSEP - In Virginia, there are two SCSEP projects funded by NRTA/AARP. In FY 1979, Virginia received $600,000 for 138 job slots--69 slots in each of its two projects. The addresses of these two projects are given below:

NRTA/AARP SCSEP
Ferebee Building
227 W. 21st St., Suite 212
P. O. Box 11342
Norfolk, VA 23517
(804)625-7001

NRTA/AARP SCSEP
318 E. Cary Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 649-3400

The national address is:

NRTA/AARP SCSEP
1909 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20049
(202)872-4813

d) Forest Service-sponsored SCSEP - This program is administered by the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is operational only in the counties included in Virginia's two National Forests--the Jefferson and the George Washington. In FY 1979, Virginia received $313,896 to fund 72 slots. The two addresses are:

Jefferson National Forest
210 Franklin Rd., S.W.
Room 254
Roanoke, VA 24001
(703)982-6276

George Washington National Forest
210 Federal Building
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
(703)433-2491

The national address is:

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Human Resource Program
P. O. Box 2417
Washington, D. C. 20013
(202)447-7483

e) Urban League-sponsored SCSEP - This program is referred to as the "Seniors in Community Service Program", and is administered by the Richmond Urban League in Virginia. In Fy 1979, $261,000 funded 65 slots. The address is:

Richmond Urban League
101 E. Clay Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804)649-8407

The national address is:

National Urban League
500 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 644-6720

f) Green Thumb, Inc. - This SCSEP program provides subsidized part-time employment in rural areas of Virginia. In FY 1979, Virginia received $1,914,075 for 445 job slots. The address is:

Green Thumb, Inc.
Marshall Building
Blackstone, VA 23824
(804) 292-5326

The national address is:

Green Thumb, Inc.
1012 14th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 789-5400

3. The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA)

Administered by the Department of Labor, CETA's purpose is to provide employment to economically disadvantaged persons who are unemployed or in school. The national address for CETA programs is:

United States Department of Labor
Manpower Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210
(202) 376-6366

In FY 1979, Virginia received $143 million in federal funds. In Virginia, the controlling body for CETA funds is the Governor's Employment and Training Council, which is located at:

11 S. 12th Street
Suite 202
Richmond, VA 23219

In Virginia, CETA is administered by ten "prime sponsors" which cover the entire state, as indicated below:

1. Peninsula Consortium
Peninsula Off. of Manpower Programs
2017 Cunningham Dr., Suite 300
P. O. Box 7489
Hampton, VA 23666
(804) 838-5206

2. Southeastern Tidewater Consortium
Southeastern Tidewater Area Manpower Authority
Janaf Executive Building, Suite 300
Janaf Shopping Center
P.O. Box 12072
Norfolk, VA 23502
(804) 461-3945

3. Richmond Consortium
Richmond Area Manpower Planning System
1113 West Moore Street
Richmond, VA 23220
(804) 780-6202

4. Roanoke Consortium
Roanoke Consortium for Manpower Services
Suite 301, Crystal Tower Building
145 West Campbell Avenue, 3rd Floor
Roanoke, VA 24014
(703) 982-2791

5. City of Alexandria
Economic Opportunities Commission
815 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 750-5731

6. Arlington County
Arlington County Manpower Administration
2100 14th Street, North
Arlington, VA 22201
(703) 558-2688

7. Fairfax County
County of Fairfax
Suite 301, Law Building
4057 Chain Bridge Road
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 691-3221

8. Prince William County
Manpower Programs
Prince William County
9300 Lee Street
Old Bennett School, Rm. 16
Manassas, VA 22110
(703) 368-9171, ext.208

9. Henrico-Hanover-Chesterfield Consortium
Manpower Administration, County of Henrico
Byrd Center Office Complex
5651 South Laburnum Avenue
Richmond, VA 23231
(804) 226-1941

10. Balance-of-State
VEC-CETA Operations
Richmond Plaza Building
111 South 6th Street
Richmond, VA 23211
(804) 786-1540

4. Local Placement Programs

There are three local placement programs in the State. These programs are separate from the VEC Older Worker Specialist Programs, the OAA-funded employment programs, or any specific CETA-funded effort, and their descriptions follow:

a) Senior Employment
League of Older Americans, Inc.
615 McDowell Ave., N.W.
Roanoke, VA 24016
(703) 345-0451

This program is designed to assist older persons in finding "appropriate" employment - that is, jobs for which they are qualified, have had training, and are interested.

b) Job Development Service of Arlington County
2100 14th Street, North
Arlington, VA 22201
(703) 558-2184

This program is designed to provide employment services to any unemployed

Arlington County resident, with a heavy emphasis on the older worker. The program is supported by multiple funding sources.

c) Senior Citizens Employment and Services of Alexandria, Inc.
121 N. St. Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-4414

This program is designed to assist those approaching retirement age plan for the years ahead, and through career counseling and listings of available jobs, help those over 60 find the most appropriate way to put their valuable skills to use. This is a private, non-profit agency; funding is by local monies and contributions.

5. The Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services

This may be an appropriate agency for some elderly clients. There are no age limits on eligibility for the program, whose purpose is to assist disabled Virginians "to enter, remain in, or return to employment." There are many local offices throughout the State, and the State address is:

Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
4901 Fitzhugh Avenue
P.O. Box 11045
Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 257-0316

6. There are several ACTION programs which pay small stipends and other direct benefits (uniforms, meals, etc.) for low-income persons over 60 years or older who are in good health. Those programs are:

a) Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), in which elders work with institutionalized and other needy children to give them love and time. There are three FGP's in Virginia (Roanoke, Petersburg, and Hampton).

b) Just as FGP seeks to serve children with special needs, the Senior Companion Program (SCP) serves special needs of adults, whether in their own home, or nursing home, or other institution. There is one SCP in Virginia, which is in Norfolk.

c) VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) hires persons over 18 years of age to work in impoverished areas in the United States. In Virginia, VISTA has approximately 17 different projects, and approximately one-fourth of the workers are sixty or over. For information on any of these three programs, contact:

ACTION
400 N. 8th Street
Box 10066
Federal Building, 7th Floor
Richmond, VA 23240
(804) 782-2197

In summary, there is federal, state, and local funding for programs which can be beneficial to OJS's. Federally funded programs include CETA, ACTION, and Title V Programs. State-funded programs are administered by the Virginia Employment Commission and the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services. There are three local employment services for OJS's whose funding is derived from multiple local services.

The various agencies are not mutually exclusive organizations, but often cooperate with each other. It is to the benefit of the OJS when there is a referral network among agencies.

One of the objectives of the model training program held in Richmond for employment counselors was that the counselors meet each other and have an opportunity to explain the role of their agencies. This was accomplished via a panel representing V.E.C., the three Title V funded agencies, CETA, and Rehabilitative Services.

In addition to paid work, there is also the realm of volunteer work, which fills a gap for many older people. Although volunteer work does not provide financial gain, it does provide rewards of self-worth and dignity to volunteer workers as they provide services to their community.

The primary route for volunteer work is the local Volunteer Action Center or Volunteer Action Bureau. For information about them, contact:

Virginia State Office on Volunteerism
205 N. 4th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

HANDOUT/REFERENCES

Because of the resource nature of this material, the entire mini-lecture should be used as a handout.

QUESTIONS/STIMULI FOR DISCUSSION

What appropriate public agencies would you suggest for the following older job seekers?

(1) A retired school teacher who wants to work part-time, either at paid or volunteer work.

(2) A former factory worker who, after eight years of retirement, has depleted his private savings and is having difficulty living on Social Security.

(3) A 59-year-old woman, recently widowed and of lower socio-economic background, who has never worked for pay, is not eligible for Social Security, and is facing many more years of life without income.

CHAPTER IV

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

A. INTRODUCTION

Employment counseling is both an art and a science. To be effective, the employment counselor needs both the technical knowledge to facilitate career development, and the interpersonal skills to establish a meaningful relationship with the job seeker. As in any helping relationship, the ability to establish support, maintain trust, and communicate clearly and honestly is essential to success. The training program described herein emphasizes the art of helping, as well as the science of career counseling. The skills presented indicate a respect for the client as a unique individual, with unique perspectives, problems, needs, and aspirations. Using the techniques developed for this training program, the job counselor will be able to assist the job seeker in an exploration of his or her cognitive and affective worlds, and to determine a course of action that is most responsive to these needs and goals.

The counselor-job seeker relationship is particularly important in working with the middle-age and older job seeker (OJS). Older individuals are much less inclined to seek help, and will very often enter the counseling situation with suspicion, doubt, and anxiety. These initial barriers are easily dispelled through the establishment of a good counselor-client relationship; if ignored, however, attempts to offer specific assistance will be fruitless. Relationship-building also takes time; the counselor will often have to contend with both unrealistic expectations on the part of the client and time pressure from the agency. Many counselors, as a result, are forced into the practice of "sticking people into boxes" as quickly as possible. Taking the time to do a good job of job counseling, however, insures the quality, as well as the quantity, of placements.

Older clients will find many of the concepts and exercises presented in the training package to be quite different from what they had expected from a job counselor. Raised with a traditional faith in the "resume-and-wait" method, the OJS may be threatened by the concept of the job seeker actively working at job development. This uneasiness may be manifested by unwillingness to engage in self-exploration, hesitancy to participate in the structured exercises, or other forms of resistance. For the OJS to give full commitment to the program, the employment counselor must initially earn the trust of the client, <u>then</u> introduce new ideas and methods. The older individual will respond positively to the exercises if the rationale and goals of the training are made clear, and if the person has sufficient faith in the counselor to experiment with new concepts and behaviors.

Finally, the myths of aging that permeate society are all too often believed by older persons themselves. Many older applicants have been turned down because, believing the stereotypes, they projected a negative self-image in the interview situation. The counselor's technical skills in job placement are of little use if the older person's self-defeating behaviors sabotage the job search process.

The effective counselor works to encourage positive thinking, and becomes the older job seeker's advocate. Often the counselor must "sell" the person on his or her own employability. By communicating, both verbally and non-verbally, a positive approach, the counselor is able to prepare the OJS to face assertively the challenge of the job search process, rather than "hope for a job". At any age, the job search process is very emotionally demanding, and a strong counselor-client relationship often makes the difference between perseverence and giving up. In addition, the counselor who employs effective communication skills serves as a model of a high level communicator, showing, as well as describing, how to function effectively in a professional relationship.

The interpersonal skills are presented sequentially, from basic, easily mastered methods to more complex techniques. Each concept is described in a brief mini-lecture; trainees then practice the skills, and receive feedback on their implementation of the technique. The emphasis is on experiential learning. Basic relationship-building techniques (attending, paraphrasing, responding to affect, open-ended questions) are presented early, to form a core of listening and responding skills, and to introduce the trainees to the idea that communication techniques <u>are</u> skills, and can be learned and practiced. The role of nonverbal communication in interpersonal relationships is stressed. Early exercises are designed to be positive, non-threatening experiences. Once the basic techniques are mastered, more advanced concepts (genuineness, concreteness, immediacy, and confrontation) are introduced and practiced. Finally, a problem-solving model is presented, in which counselor and client work jointly to brainstorm various possibilities, and to analyze the positive and negative consequences of each alternative. The final choices are made by the client, of course. This methodology for problem-solving is introduced <u>after</u> the relationship skills. All too often, inexperienced counselors tend to rush into an attack on the clients' problems, without taking the time to establish the relationship and determine the real needs and assets of the potential applicant.

The basic interpersonal skills presented in this section comprise a major portion of the employment counselor training package. These relationship-building techniques are frequently ignored in more traditional forms of training for vocational counselors. It is our belief, however, that the ability to establish a meaningful working relationship with an individual or group is essential to provide any form of services. Indeed, the beauty of the interpersonal skills training is in its widespread applicability. Examples and exercises approximate situations involving work with older job seekers, but the fundamental skills have utility in almost all situations, whether personal or professional.

The following format is used to introduce each of the skills: mini-lecture, exercises, homework. The skills which will be presented are nonverbal communication and attending, paraphrasing, open-ended questions, responding to affect, advanced communication skills, and problem-solving assistance. References and suggested readings are listed at the conclusion of the chapter.

B. STARTING THE GROUP

The basic tenet of any form of group work is that people learn from each other. To facilitate this process, and to speed the development of group cohesion, it is suggested that the group be initiated with an "icebreaker" activity. Icebreakers relieve tension, serve as introductions, and set the tone for group interaction and experiential learning.

ICEBREAKER EXERCISE

OBJECTIVES:

- To allow group members to get acquainted with each other, and to begin building group cohesion.
- To acquaint trainers with group members, and vice versa.
- To initiate and model an open, supportive, informal group climate.

ACTIVITY:

Divide the group into pairs of people who did not know one another previously. Trainers participate if there is an odd number of group members.

One member of each pair interviews the other to get acquainted; after five minutes, switch roles, so that each person is interviewed. The attached interview form is only for the purposes of initiating conversation; any information that the person is willing to share with the group is appropriate. Interviewees may, of course, refuse to answer any questions if they do not wish to share that information with the group.

At the completion of the interviews, each group member in turn introduces his or her partner to the group. The trainer presents first, to model appropriate behavior to the group.

TIME: Approximately 60 minutes*

* Times for each exercise are based on a group of ten people. Schedules should be adjusted for larger or smaller groups.

"OFFICIAL" INTERVIEW FORM

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Organization: _____

"Roots, Branches, and Twigs" (Family Background)

Recreational Interests (Hobbies and Leisure Time Activities):

Nicest thing that happened to you in the last week:

One interesting fact about me is...

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION AND ATTENDING

MINI-LECTURE

Nonverbal communication is a basic component of any interpersonal interaction. Every movement, every facial expression, even silence, communicates something to the other person. In society, one learns to focus on verbal content, rather than on the impact of the nonverbal message. To be most effective in helping others, however, it is essential to be aware both of our own nonverbal communications to others, and their nonverbal statements to us. This awareness is called attending.

Egan (1975) describes four aspects of nonverbal communication:

- eye contact
- facial expression
- posture and gestures
- voice quality

Eye contact is used to communicate interest. When an individual is really "tuned in" to what a person is saying, he or she looks at that individual. If the person does not make eye contact, the message conveyed is one of disinterest, distraction, or some other negative thought. On the other hand, if one stares or looks too hard at someone who is talking, it may be perceived as demanding or threatening. The client's eye contact also provides important cues. If a client avoids eye contact, it can mean that he or she is shy, embarrassed, afraid, ashamed, feeling depressed, etc. As with all forms of nonverbal communication, this information is a clue, not a fact. Often similar nonverbal behaviors will convey very different meanings; the counselor should always check out his or her hypothesis before making conclusions.

Facial expressions communicate an endless variety of emotions. The face almost always expresses how involved one is in the interaction. When an individual is totally attending, fully feeling the impact of a job seeker's communication, his or her facial expression will show it, and convey care and understanding as well.

The counselor's posture should communicate openness and acceptance to a job seeker. Ideally, one should sit directly in front of the other person, with no desk or other barrier in between. Gestures should be natural and consistent with the overall message. Turning to one side, folding one's arms, or sitting stiffly will make a job seeker think that the counselor is being defensive. Leaning slightly forward in a relaxed manner, on the other hand, expresses involvement and responsiveness. The distance between helper and

client is also important. Too great a distance shows lack of interest. Being too close may make the other person feel that the counselor is prying or being too aggressive. The nonverbal communication of the client will indicate whether or not the counselor's nonverbal behavior is appropriate.

Voice quality is another effective way of communicating that one understands and empathizes with what the other person is saying. How something is said often has more effect than what is said. Voice quality (tone, volume, speed, etc.) should be used to get across an acceptance of, and confidence in, the client. Awareness of the voice tones of clients also provides the counselor with clues to their emotional reactions.

An effective helping person uses nonverbal communication with clients to convey four fundamental messages:

- attention to what the client is really saying
- respect for the feelings of the client
- encouragement of the client's efforts to convey information, show feelings, etc.
- support to help the client achieve a desired goal

Communication is effective only when the verbal and nonverbal messages are consistent and congruent. However, individuals' nonverbal communication sometimes contradicts their words. The result is a confusing message, and the effectiveness of the communication will be lost. Looking for inconsistencies in a client's verbal and nonverbal messages often reveals valuable information. Research has shown that facial expression accounts for 55% of the influence our communication has on others, voice quality accounts for 38%, and what we actually say accounts for only 7% (Mehrabian, 1972). Attending to the nonverbal component of an individual's communication is essential in the establishment of an effective counselor-client relationship.

EXERCISE

SENSITIVITY TO NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVES:

- To develop an awareness of the importance of the non-verbal aspects of communication.

- To encourage group interaction.

ACTIVITY:

Divide the group into pairs of individuals who did not know each other previously. Both individuals blindfold themselves, then carry on a discussion for five minutes (suggested topic: "the nature of my job"). At the end of the time, participants remove blindfolds and share their experiences of communicating without being able to receive visual nonverbal messages. The full group reconvenes to discuss the exercise.

TIME: 30 minutes (about 15 minutes for instructions and exercise, and 15 minutes for discussion).

EXERCISE

NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

OBJECTIVES:

- To sensitize participants to the many possible forms of nonverbal communication.
- To allow people to experience making nonverbal statements.
- To allow individuals to practice being aware of the nonverbal messages of others.
- To make individuals aware that similar nonverbal behaviors may be caused by different emotions, and that the same emotion may be manifested by many different behaviors.

ACTIVITY:

Divide the group into pairs of persons who did not know each other previously. One person chooses the role of the speaker, the other the listener. The speaker takes the yellow cards, the listener the green cards. On each yellow speaker card is given an emotional state, and each green listener card describes a nonverbal behavior.* Cards are to be kept hidden. The speakers talk to the listeners about their reactions to this session of training, while nonverbally communicating the emotion on card 1. The listeners respond with the nonverbal behaviors on their card 1; they may also give minimal verbal responses, but the focus should be on nonverbal communication. The trainer should stop the interaction after 1-2 minutes, and participants share how the nonverbal behavior of their partner affects them, and attempt to identify the message on the card. After a brief period for discussion, participants are instructed to proceed to card 2, and the interaction is repeated.

After all four cards are used, the partners switch cards, and reverse speaker/listener roles. Participants should randomize the order of their cards for this portion of the exercise, to insure different emotion/behavior pairings.

At the conclusion of the exercise (8 interactions), the entire group reconvenes to share experiences.

TIME: 50 minutes.

* Yellow cards: 1) anxiety; 2) boredom; 3) happiness, 4) depression.
  Green cards: 1) looking at watch, fidgeting; 2) avoiding all eye contact; 3) intense staring, moving very close; 4) shuffling papers, attending to distractions.

HOMEWORK

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION AND ATTENDING

Focus on attending and nonverbal messages. Take note of two instances in your interactions with clients, two instances in your interactions with co-workers, and two instances in your interactions with friends, when you were aware of nonverbal communication. Observe both your nonverbal messages and those of the other person. Be specific: behaviorally, what did you (or the other person) do? What message do you feel was conveyed by the behavior?

Be prepared to discuss these examples of nonverbal behavior at your next session.

NOTES:

Behavior	Message

PARAPHRASING

MINI-LECTURE

Paraphrasing is a special type of attending which assists in establishing rapport and in helping the client communicate. The objective of paraphrasing is to feed back to the client the essence of what he or she has just stated. For example:

Client: They told me that they had a lot of other good applicants and that's why I didn't get the job, but I don't think they even considered me. They probably saw on the application that I was 60, and that was it.

Counselor: Even though they told you differently, you feel that you were rejected due to your age.

The counselor simply and concisely repeats the major points of the client's statement. When this is done in a caring and empathic manner (remember the nonverbal component!), three important messages are conveyed:

- The counselor is listening
- The counselor is working to understand (and, as a result,)
- The counselor is concerned.

The client, perceiving the counselor as actively involved, is more likely to continue to talk in more depth about the issue.

Other examples:

Client: I don't like waiting for that Social Security check each month. I've worked all my life, made my own way, and now I'm dependent on the government.

Counselor: You would prefer to remain independent.

Client: I don't know if I could do that anymore. It's been years since I did that kind of work. It has probably changed a lot.

Counselor: You're afraid that your skills are outdated.

Client: I've been laid up with this illness for months, but I feel fine now. I'd really like to go back to work.

Counselor: It sounds like you're really excited about the prospect of going back to work.

Paraphrasing is a relatively simple technique, but is extremely effective in establishing rapport (see Carkhuff, 1980). It also serves as an aid to the counselor; in order to paraphrase accurately, one must attend carefully to all components of communication. Finally, it provides a check on the accuracy of the counselor's perception. Even if the paraphrase is not completely accurate, the client will perceive the counselor's attention and concern.

EXERCISE

PARAPHRASING

OBJECTIVES:

- To allow participants to practice paraphrasing another individual's messages.
- To allow participants to experience the effect of their paraphrases on the other individual's subsequent messages and behavior.
- To allow participants to practice responding to an individual who has midlife concerns.
- To introduce the concept of practicing in triads.

ACTIVITY:

Trainers model paraphrasing and the use of triads in structured training groups.

Divide the group into triads. The roles of counselor, client, and observer are rotated within each triad. The observer is instructed to focus on the nonverbal behavior of each person, and on the paraphrases used by the counselor and their impact on the interaction.

The counselor practices nonverbal attending and paraphrases the client's messages. After four minutes, the observer and the client discuss with the counselor things that he or she did well. The roles are rotated and the procedure is repeated (twice).

At the conclusion of the exercise, the entire group reconvenes to share experiences.

TIME: 60 minutes.

HOMEWORK

PARAPHRASING

Practice paraphrasing with your clients (or in other interpersonal interactions). Focus on the outcome of your paraphrase (i.e., the response of the other person).

Be prepared to discuss your experiences.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

MINI-LECTURE

Questions are used in counseling to assist the client in communicating. Every question, whether used to explore feelings or simply to gather data, should have a purpose; the counselor should have a clear idea of how the information obtained will be used to help the client. Questions on tangential matters lead to a loss of focus and a diffusion of the counselor's effectiveness.

The best questions are those which gather the most information or facilitate the most exploration. Questions may be defined as "open-ended" or "close-ended"; a close-ended question gives the client limited ability to respond, while an open-ended question encourages the client to provide more data.

Compare the following counselor responses:

Client - I've worked most of my life as a typist.

Counselor A - Did you like your work?

Counselor B - Tell me how you felt about your work.

Very often, Counselor A's question will be answered "yes" or "no", and little new information will have been obtained. At worst, the counselor and client will be caught up in a rapid-fire question-and-answer session. Counselor B, on the other hand, asks for more input. Technically, Counselor B's response is not a question at all, but a direct request that the client explore his or her feelings. Even if the client offers a minimal response, further open-ended questions may be employed:

Client - Well, I liked it.

Counselor - What were the things that you liked about it?

A good way to check out the effectiveness of one's question is to analyze who is providing the information.

Counselor - Can you operate a fork lift?

Client - Yes.

The counselor provides the information; the client simply confirms it. The interview follows the counselor's agenda. Compare this with the following:

Counselor - Tell me about the types of equipment you're qualified to operate.

Client - Well, I've run a fork lift for eight years. I spent a couple of years operating a backhoe, and driving a front-end loader...a lot of different things, really. I liked the backhoe work.

Here the counselor facilitates the client's development of an idea, and the client is free to provide whatever information he or she feels is relevant, and to focus on things that are most important. A counselor who is too directive frequently dictates the entire focus of interactions, and clients may or may not get to what is important to them. The effective counselor is flexible and responsive to the needs of the client, and employs an open-ended format to allow the client to have a maximum amount of input.

EXERCISE

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

OBJECTIVE:

- To give participants practice in asking open-ended questions.
- To allow participants to observe the increased effectiveness of open-ended techniques in facilitating client exploration.

ACTIVITY:

Divide the group into triads; the roles of counselor, client, and observer are assigned within each triad. The observer is instructed to focus on the counselor's style (nonverbal and verbal), rather than the content of the interaction.

The counselor's task is to determine facts and feelings about the client's vocational history. The role-play represents the initial interview; the goal is, through the use of open-ended questions, to gather as much information as possible, using open-ended questions to allow the client to set the agenda and focus on the most relevant topics.

After each role-play, the observer and client give feedback to the counselor. After each person has had the opportunity to role-play the counselor, the large group is reconvened, and the exercise processed. Focus questions: Did the counselor use open-ended questions? Did the client feel that he/she was able to talk about his/her most important areas? Did he/she feel comfortable? What did the observers notice about the "flow" of the interaction? Was rapport established?

TIME: 60 minutes.

HOMEWORK

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

In one initial interaction with a client, focus your attention specifically on asking open-ended questions.

Were these questions helpful in obtaining information? Did they facilitate self-exploration? How do you think they affected the way the client feels about you, and your reaction? Be prepared to discuss these issues with the group at the next session.

RESPONDING TO AFFECT

MINI-LECTURE

There are two basic components of every communication: content, or factual information, and affect, or feeling. An effective counselor is able to hear not only the information, but the underlying feeling. Responding to the content component leads to a cognitively-oriented interaction:

Client: I'd been working for those people for twenty years, and they laid me off with two weeks' notice - just like that!

Counselor: What kind of work did you do?

Client: Well, the last three years I ran the processing machinery...

Responding to affect encourages the client to further explore his or her feelings:

Client: I'd been working for those people for twenty years, and they laid me off with two weeks' notice - just like that!

Counselor: You feel like, after all you've given them, they've really let you down.

Client: Really! They don't think of you as a human being! You're just another piece of machinery - when you're not productive, out you go... out on the scrap heap!

Society is oriented toward content-based communication. Talking about feelings is discouraged. Feelings, however, dictate behavior. If a client's emotional response is blocking his or her progress, no amount of cognitive information (e.g., offering alternate jobs) will be helpful. The effective counselor must be comfortable talking about feelings, and willing to model talking about affect by sharing his or her own emotional reactions. Shared feelings establish a common bond. The counselor in the first situation above may know nothing at all about a processing machine, but he or she can relate to the client's emotional response of feeling rejected and angry. When the client perceives that the counselor knows and respects how he or she feels, the foundation is laid for a productive counseling relationship of mutual trust.

Two basic counselor skills are required: the counselor must accurately perceive the clients feelings, and convey this perception. The response to feelings should be tentative, rather than labeling.

For example:

Counselor A: You are angry because you didn't get the raise you were promised.

Counselor B: You didn't get the raise. I sense that you're upset with them for not giving it to you.

Counselor B avoids telling the client how he/she, the client, feels. The "I" statement paired with a paraphrase, is offered as a hypothesis for discussion, rather than as a label.

Many clients proceed through an entire session, or series of sessions, and deal solely with facts, skills, placements, interviews, etc., without ever talking about what is bothering them. Any life change that brings a client to an employment counselor, however, will have a significant affective component. The effective counselor recognizes the importance of focusing on the emotional aspect of the client's world, and is able to assist the client in getting in touch with his or her feelings.

EXERCISE

RESPONDING TO AFFECT

OBJECTIVES:

- To provide practice in the identification of the affective component of a client's communication.
- To provide practice in responding to affect.
- To develop an awareness, through group process, of different interpretations of, and responses to, similar statements.

ACTIVITY:

Present a handout of client statements to the group, and an Affective Word List.* The trainers discuss the first statement with the group, modeling the identification of feelings and the formulation of appropriate responses that would accurately reflect these feelings. After a brief check to insure that the instructions are fully understood, the group members identify feelings expressed in the following client statements, write the appropriate feeling words below the statement, and formulate a possible counselor response. After all members have completed the task, the full group will discuss the interpretations, and the different responses, of individual group members.

TIME: 45 minutes

*Adapted from Alpaugh and Haney, 1978.

RESPONDING TO AFFECT

1) Statement: "I don't know what to do. Nothing I try seems to work out. I feel like saying, 'to hell with it'."

Feelings:

Response:

2) Statement: "I don't know if I'll get the job or not, but I feel like, for once, I put my best foot forward in the interview. A lot of times I just freeze up, but this time I feel like I did a good job."

Feelings:

Response:

3) Statement: "What a waste of time! I couldn't believe it! The guy sat there and told me that he didn't like to hire older people because it takes too long to train them. Isn't that against the law, or something? I was speechless. I should have said something. But I just left."

Feelings:

Response:

4) Statement: "What can I do, really? When I go in for an interview, my hands turn cold, I blush, and the words just won't come. I feel like an idiot. I hate interviews. It's not fair; I can do the job, I just can't do the interview."

Feelings:

Response:

AFFECTIVE WORD LIST

(Adapted from Alpaugh and Haney, 1978)

abandoned
accepted
afraid
alarmed
amazed
angry
annoyed
anxious
apprehensive
ashamed
belittled
bitter
bored
bottled up
calm
capable
competent
competitive
confident
confused
contented
crushed
defeated
defensive
depressed
desperate
despondent
discouraged
disinterested
dissatisfied
distressed
elated
embarrassed
empty
energetic
enthusiastic
envious
excited
fearful
friendly
frustrated
furious
futile
grateful
guilty
happy
helpless
hopeful
hopeless
humble
humiliated
hurt
inadequate
incompetent
inferior
insecure
insignificant
irritated
jealous
joyful
lonely
miserable
misunderstood
needed
negative
neglected
nervous
numb
pleased
pressured
proud
put down
puzzled
regretful
rejected
relaxed
relieved
resentful
sad
satisfied
scared
shocked
shy
startled
surprised
tearful
tense
terrified
threatened
thrilled
trusting
uncertain
uncooperative
understood
uneasy
unhappy
unloved
upset
wanted
worthless
worthy

EXERCISE

COUNSELING PRACTICE

OBJECTIVES:

- To develop an awareness of the affective component of interactions.
- To practice using open-ended questions to facilitate discussion.
- To practice responding to affect.
- To practice previously learned interpersonal skills (nonverbal communication, paraphrasing).

ACTIVITY:

Group members close their eyes and relax. The facilitator asks them to select one of four basic emotions (mad, glad, sad, fearful), and leads them on a guided fantasy through a time when they strongly experienced this emotion. Participants are given ample time to get in touch with the situation, both in terms of the events that caused the emotion and the actual emotional experience. Participants then break into triads; the roles of counselor and client are chosen, and the client relates the experience to the counselor. The counselor employs open-ended questions to facilitate the discussion, and responds to affect to encourage exploration of the emotional component of the experience. At the conclusion, participants stop to discuss the counselor techniques and their effects, then rotate roles. After each person has had an opportunity to practice counselor skills, the entire group reconvenes to discuss the exercise.

Directions for guided fantasy:

Give group members ample time to relax. Turning down the lights often helps in relaxation and reduction of outside distractions. After the members are relaxed, instruct them to select one of the basic emotions, and to think of a specific situation in which the emotion was experienced. Give plenty of time for participants to set the scene. Then provide, with ample spacing between each question, the following stimuli:

- Where does the scene take place?....
- Who is in the scene?....
- What is happening?....
- How do you feel?....
- How do you perceive the other person (or people) as feeling?....

Instruct the group to bring their fantasies to a conclusion, allow

time for this process, then bring the focus of the group back to the present.

Guided fantasies must be done slowly. The leader's statements must facilitate, not intrude upon, the mental imagery.

TIME: 60 minutes.

HOMEWORK

RESPONDING TO AFFECT

Practice responding to the affective component of a client's communication:

How did you feel when focusing on affect? How did the client respond? Was there any difficulty on your part, or on the client's, in talking about feelings?

Did this approach change the direction of the interaction? If so, how?

Be prepared to discuss your experiences at the next session.

ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS

MINI-LECTURE

Counseling is communication; to be effective, both counselor and client should be able to communicate thoughts and feelings. The counselor, by modeling direct communication, increases the probability that the client will respond on a similar level. The following skills are essential for effective interpersonal communication (Egan, 1975): (1) genuineness, (2) concreteness, (3) immediacy, and (4) confrontation.

Genuineness involves being one's self, without facade. The genuine person is aware of his or her own feelings, and deals with them directly and openly. He or she is never "phony", and does not change when different people are encountered. Being genuine involves being spontaneous, non-defensive, self-disclosing; in short, being open and natural. Clients will not respond to counselors perceived as devious, manipulative, or artificial.

Concreteness is a willingness to talk specifically about feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Generalized discussions and vague solutions to vaguely defined problems will not lead to effective action. In the following example, Counselor B is much more willing to look concretely at issues than Counselor A:

Client: I don't do well at all in job interviews.

Counselor A: Interviews are stressful for many people.

Counselor B: Let's take some time and look at specific things in the interview situation that cause you problems, and how you react to them.

The client is not being concrete. Counselor A matches the client's level of vagueness. Counselor B, on the other hand, works to bring the problem into focus, to identify specific problem areas which need attention.

Boring, rambling counseling sessions are indicators of a lack of concreteness. The vagueness may seem "safe" to the client (and the counselor), but it is not productive.

Immediacy is direct one-to-one communication about the here-and-now. Egan (1975) postulates that all client problems are rooted in interpersonal difficulties, and that looking at the interpersonal relationship between the counselor and client is one way of examining these difficulties. This form of communication requires a high level of counselor self-awareness, and also the ability to avoid sounding judgmental or critical. For example:

Client: We've been working for three weeks, but I don't know that we've really accomplished very much. All we do is sit and talk.

Counselor: From a number of things you've said, I sense that you have doubts about my ability to help you.

The client's problems with counseling and the counselor are eliminating the chance for any benefit from the interaction. Until this issue is resolved, no progress will be made. The counselor, by modeling a willingness to talk openly about the issue, encourages the client to respond in a similar manner.

Immediacy statements should be offered as tentative hypotheses and topics for discussion, not as criticisms or defenses. It is essential that the counselor be accurate in his or her perception, and have a purpose in introducing the shift in focus. Genuineness (being one's self) is a prerequisite for immediacy.

Confrontation is defined by Egan (1976) as any action that invites a person to stop and investigate his or her behavior and its consequences more carefully. The concept of confrontation is very threatening to many individuals, and is often thought to mean a personal attack; as seen by Egan, however, confrontation is a high level interpersonal skill which is used to facilitate the person's growth. In its simpliest form, confrontation involves focusing the person's attention on discrepancies: between what the person says and does, for example, or between how two people perceive a situation. Discrepancies between a person's verbal and nonverbal behavior may also be discussed in a manner beneficial to that individual.

Confrontation must be based on a trusting, well-established relationship and presented in a manner that will minimize defensiveness. If individuals perceive a confrontation as threatening, they will react defensively, and not benefit.

Counselor A: You say you want a job, but you don't want to work to get one.

Client: Well, you haven't been much help.

Compare Counselor A's response with:

Counselor B: You and I have been working together for some time now, without much luck. Maybe we should stop and try to figure out what is blocking us.

Counselor A accuses the client of sabotaging the counseling process, and draws defensiveness and hostility. Counselor B invites the client to focus on the process, without placing blame for the lack of productivity.

Effective confrontation is accurate, tentative, and caring. Clearly the confronter must be a good listener, able to establish an atmosphere of mutual respect, and able to present the confrontive information in a

manner acceptable to the other person. The message should be current, focusing on something the person is doing at that point in time, and descriptive, telling the person what the confronter sees. The fact that the confrontive statement is based on the confronter's perception should always be made clear. Otherwise the statement will come across as judgmental. In the following example, Counselor A's tone is accusatory, whereas Counselor B is willing to take responsibility for his or her perception.

Counselor A: You say you're excited, but you look like you're bored.

Counselor B: I hear you saying that you're excited, but you sit slumped down in your chair and I perceive you as being disinterested.

Other examples of effective confrontive statements:

Counselor : We've spent a lot of time talking about things you can't do. Why don't we talk about things that you can do?

Counselor: Could it be that the passiveness that I perceive could also be seen by interviewers?

Counselor: I hear you saying that you don't interact well in interview situations. In our sessions, however, I've been very comfortable. I wonder how you see our relationship, and if it is somehow different from others.

Notice that each statement is not an attack, but offers the client an opportunity to see and explore his or her behavior from a different perspective.

The use of these communication skills will demonstrate respect for the client; model a high level of interpersonal skills, and allow the client to see the counselor as a person willing and able to be of assistance. The client who perceives the counselor as effective will be more likely to respond to counseling.

EXERCISE

VIDEOTAPE PRACTICE

OBJECTIVE: To practice using all attending and responding skills.

One of the most promising innovations in counselor education is the use of videotape. With videotape, the trainee is immediately able to see and hear his or her nonverbal and verbal communication, and its effect on the client. This visual evidence provides much more effective feedback than the verbal reports of clients, observers, or supervisors.

With the increasing availability of videotape units, the utilization of videotape for in-service training has become more of a possibility. The equipment is relatively simple to operate. Many individuals express an initial reluctance to be taped, but, as a rule, the anxiety quickly diminishes once the taping begins and the trainee sees how helpful the audiovisual feedback can be. As with any structured group exercise, however, no one should be pressured to participate against his or her will.

ACTIVITY:

The following exercise is designed to give trainees a chance to practice all of the communication skills in an extended role-play situation. It is most effective when videotape is used; it may, however, be employed using audiotape, or observer reports. Group members who are chosen to role-play older job seekers are given a "client" sheet, and allowed to familiarize themselves with the role. The "counselor" does not see the information on the sheet, but uses his or her attending and responding skills to facilitate the client's exploration of his or her problems. Other group members record their observations on the "feedback" form, which has been designed to help the observers focus on specific counselor behaviors. At the conclusion of the role-play interview (about 10 minutes), the tape is reviewed, and the trainer, "client", and group offer feedback to the "counselor".

Participants continue to rotate roles until each trainee who wishes to practice his or her skills on videotape has had the opportunity to do do.

TIME: 90 minutes.

The possibilities for the use of videotape in counselor training are great. The above exercise is only one suggestion. Trainers are encouraged to be creative in their use of videotape equipment.

For further information on the use of videotape in counselor education, see Ivey and Authier (1980).

VIDEOTAPE PRACTICE:

"CLIENT" #1

Name: Mr._____

Age: 54

Education: 8th grade

Presenting Problem

- formerly worked on loading dock at a sheet metal plant (for 20 years)
- had a disc operation - unable to work at the sheet metal plant
- turned down for Social Security disability
- needs work to support family
- personal savings account nearly exhausted
- referred by rehabilitation services worker

Affect

- angry at Social Security system
- generalizes anger to all government agencies ("You probably won't help me either!")
- has difficulty discussing employment issues because of anger

VIDEOTAPE PRACTICE

"CLIENT" #2

Name: Mrs._____

Age: 60

Education: 10th grade

Presenting Problem

- widow (for 6 months)
- having difficulty making ends meet
- hasn't worked for 35 years (prior employment: store clerk)

Affect

- lonely, has few social contacts
- depressed, shows little or no emotional expression
- has poor opinion of her worth as a person
- lacks confidence in her ability to be competitive in the job market
- not clear about job goals - will take anything

FEEDBACK

Counselor: _____ Client: _____

Basic Skills: Examples:

Nonverbal

Paraphrasing

Open-ended Questions

Responding to Affect

Advanced Skills:

Genuineness

Concreteness

Immediacy

Confrontation

Other Effective Counselor Behaviors:

HOMEWORK

ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. Be aware of using the skills covered today (genuineness, immediacy, concreteness, and confrontation) with your clients, and be prepared to discuss interactions in which the skills were used.

2. In 1-2 sentences, describe a counselor/client interaction, either in which you have been involved, or a fantasized situation, in which the following skills would be appropriate. Formulate a counselor statement illustrating the skill.

   a. Genuineness

      Situation:

      Statement:

   b. Concreteness

      Situation:

      Statement:

c. Immediacy
Situation:

Statement:

d. Confrontation
Situation:

Statement:

Be prepared to discuss these situations with the group.

PROBLEM-SOLVING ASSISTANCE

MINI-LECTURE

The ultimate goal of job counseling is to encourage more effective job-seeking behaviors. After the establishment of rapport, the task of the counselor is to work with the client to make the decisions facing him or her in an effective manner; in effect, to select productive job seeking behaviors. The counseling method presented is client-focused; the counselor does not solve problem for the client, but works with him or her to achieve an effective resolution.

The following problem-solving assistance model will help clients make their own choices. In addition to addressing the problem at hand, clients will also be shown ways to handle their own problems in the future, without assistance. "Give a person a fish, and he'll eat for a day; teach him to fish, and he'll eat for a lifetime;" the goal of problem-solving assistance is to "teach people to fish," rather than give a specific solution to a specific concern. This concept also maintains the client's autonomy; he or she provides the data, and makes the final decision. The counselor facilitates the process, but does not dictate the outcome. The ultimate responsibility for the decision is always the client's.

In this technique, adapted from Alpaugh & Haney (1978), the counselor guides the client through nine steps:

Step	Example
1) Identify and clarify the problem(s)	"All of the children have moved away. Inflation is cutting into our budget, and I would like to go back to work. But where?"
2) Establish priorities	"Other areas are causing concern, but I feel ready to devote my immediate attention to the issue of going back to work."
3) Establish obtainable goals (Again, be specific)	"I would like work with the public, XXX/hr., and I would like to obtain personal satisfaction from the type of work I'd be doing."
4) Generate alternatives	List various job possibilities, e.g., secretary, receptionist.

Step	Example
5) Examine positive and negative results of each alternative.	Alternative 1: Secretary in a small office. Positive: good work environment Negative: low pay, clerical skills rusty Alternative 2: Receptionist in a hospital Positive: meet new people, benefits Negative: shift work, routine
6) Choose most effective course	"Even though I would make less, I think I'd be happier in a small office."
7) Establish criteria for success	"I will employ my job search skills to work toward getting an interview for this position."
8) Implement plan	"I will contact the head of the firm for more information on the position. If it sounds interesting, I will apply, leave my resume, etc."
9) Evaluate outcome	

Often problems, or sets of problems, are seen as jumbled and confusing. This technique requires the client to actually sort out his or her options, and to consider the positive and negative outcomes of each option. Often the very act of specifying the positive and negative consequences of each alternative to another person will make choices clear to the client. If the chosen course of action is not effective, the counselor and client return to step 4, evaluate other alternatives, and continue from that point.

EXERCISE

PROBLEM-SOLVING ASSISTANCE

OBJECTIVE:

- To practice using the 9-step model of problem solving assistance.

ACTIVITY:

A participant is asked to play the role of counselor and a trainer is the "client". The first three steps of the model are role played before the group: identifying the problem, establishing priorities, and establishing goals. The group as a whole then accomplishes step four by brainstorming alternatives.* The role play continues, with the "counselor" assisting the "client" through steps five, six, and seven: examining positive and negative consequences of each alternative, selecting the most effective course, and establishing criteria for success. The group then discusses the process.

TIME: 45 minutes.

*Rules for Brainstorming (Bristol, 1974)

1. Criticism of ideas is not allowed. During brainstorming, ideas are recorded without comment or evaluation. Later, when the brainstorming process has been completed, evaluation of the alternatives takes place.

2. "Free wheeling" is encouraged. Wild ideas may stimulate other participants to think of new alternatives. Also, outrageous ideas may be toned down later when the options are evaluated.

3. Quantity is encouraged. The list of ideas can always be shortened later. The more alternatives there are, the greater the likelihood of "prizewinners".

4. Combinations and variations of others' ideas are welcome. Participants may contribute spin-offs of previously mentioned ideas or combinations of other participants' contributions. Often the new ideas are even better than the original.

HOMEWORK

PROBLEM SOLVING

Employ the 9 step problem-solving model to cope with a problem you are now experiencing. Jot down notes: what, specifically, is the problem? The goals? Sit down with another person (co-worker, spouse, etc.) and generate alternatives, then look at the consequences of each alternative. How will you define success? Choose and implement a course of action, and evaluate the outcome.

Was this process helpful? Be prepared to discuss your experiences at the next session.

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CHAPTER V

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP MODULES

A. INTRODUCTION

The eight structured training group sessions which follow are designed to help participants improve their job seeking skills. Many people believe that they have little control over whether they can get a job. They may feel that successful job seeking is a matter of luck, or they may take a passive role in the process and wait for potential employers to initiate activity. However, if job seekers take an active role in the job search process, they substantially increase the probability of being hired. The skills required to conduct an active job search can be easily taught and learned. When techniques such as interviewing and developing job leads are learned in a group setting, the results are especially effective. Participants learn by observing each other, practicing skills together, exchanging ideas, and supporting and encouraging each other in their job searches. The skills presented in these sessions will enable participants to be more successful in future job seeking, as well as in their present search.

The structured training group sessions focus on two general areas: self-assessment and the development of job seeking skills. Self-assessment is the first, and often the most important, step in the job seeking process. Older job seekers must know their individual assets if their presentations are to be effective in interviews, letters, telepnone conversations, resumes, or job applications. Knowing who they are, and what they can do, will also help job seekers find work that is interesting and satisfying. The self-assessment exercises in the first four sessions focus on abilities, personal strengths, interests, and values. These exercises are based on activities in the Career Motivation Program (CMP), which has been developed by Munson, et al (1980). The CMP is a useful source of supplementary materials for use with the self-assessment exercises in this manual.

Interviewing skills are presented in Sessions Two through Five. Participants are given background information about the interviewing process so they will know what to expect. They then have the opportunity to practice starting the interview with small talk, giving positive information about themselves, communicating interest and confidence nonverbally, and answering difficult questions. No two interviews are exactly alike, but with practice and feedback, job seekers can become more confident and more effective in interactions with prospective employers.

The field survey is introduced in Session Five as a method of researching jobs and companies. Group members are given lists of suggested questions and instructed to do at least one field survey before the next session. Results of the surveys are then shared with the group.

In Session Six, participants are assisted in the writing of a qualification summary, which is a tool for organizing work history, skills, abilities, achievements, and personal strengths. The summary may be used in preparation for interviews and as a resource for completing applications.

In Session Seven, group members are trained in the following job hunting strategies: developing job leads, stating qualifications, telephone contacts, and follow-ups. Participants are also given guidelines for resume writing and the opportunity to practice doing so using the qualifications summary worksheet.

The final session focuses on decision making. Participants are given a model for decision making, and they have the opportunity to practice making an employment decision with input from the group. (The model presented in Session Eight is a simplified version of the Problem Solving Assistance steps described in Chapter IV).

The eight sessions have similar formats. Each begins with a list of objectives. The agenda follows, and usually includes an introduction, review of homework, a mini-lecture(s), and instructions and worksheets for an exercise(s) or skills practice. Each session closes with a review of the session, a request for the group's reactions to it, a preview of the next session, and a homework assignment.

Some assumptions were made in the development of these sessions. First, it was assumed that counselors would select participants who are late middle age and older job seekers. Employed individuals in this age group who are interested in changing jobs are also appropriate. It is important to note, however, that this does not preclude the use of these modules with other age groups. The materials included here may be adapted for a variety of target groups.

The timing of all activities is based on the assumption that there will be ten participants in the group. Activities may need to be modified, or more or less time allowed for them, if this is not the case. Finally, each session was designed to last two hours, because it was believed that the attention and energy of participants would decrease beyond that time.

In the following section, immediately preceding the structured training group sessions, the concept and steps of career management are presented. The training program for older job seekers is based on this model, so this background information will be helpful for counselors who are planning to use the materials in this chapter. The career management concept may also be presented to older job seekers, as appropriate, during the training period.

B. CAREER MANAGEMENT

Virtually all of the transitions and crises of adult life, especially the mid-life transition, involve the individual's occupation either directly or indirectly. Almost everyone spends more time at work (which includes homemaking) than in any other waking activity. In addition, most of us make a considerable ego investment in our occupations -- thus any stress which affects our self-concept will usually be reflected in our job as well.

Many older job seekers feel stuck in an undesirable situation which they are helpless to do anything about. They are usually in a crisis, or at least experiencing considerable stress. They have a tendency to play a dependent role and to expect the work of job seeking to be done for them, as a result of the "learned helplessness" which we discussed previously. Sometimes they seem to be unable to see any available alternatives to their situation; sometimes they can see alternatives, but are unable or unwilling to choose one.

This training program emphasizes the individual's taking an active role in managing and carrying out his or her job seeking efforts. It does so by providing training in skills which can greatly enhance the chances of placement. At least equally important, such an approach helps to restore the experience of control over the course of one's work and life. Further, it engages the person in the kind of advance preparation and planning which can help to reduce the stress and to facilitate the constructive outcome of present and future crises. We call this approach "Career Management" to emphasize this process of taking active control of one's job seeking.

An individual's career may be visualized as a lifelong series of decision points, some major and some minor. A decision point is so named because the individual has two or more alternatives, and must choose one. Each major career decision has a major influence on what the next major decision point will be, as well as how many and what kind of alternatives will be available at that point. Most people have never been taught the techniques of making good decisions, career or otherwise. In addition to job placement, one of our objectives in career counseling should be to help the client learn a decision making process which can be utilized at future decision points in life.

Career management approaches career counseling by combining basic management principles with decision theory. Like any other form of management, career management consists of (1) establishing goals, (2) determining specific objectives and plans, including a timetable, for accomplishing these goals, (3) carrying out these plans,(4) monitoring progress and adjusting actions accordingly, and (5) periodically assessing goals.

The crucial first step in career management involves clarifying career goals in occupational terms. Instead of just wanting "a job", a client should be helped to identify job possibilities which can capitalize on past experience, interests, strengths, values, etc. Clarifying a career goal usually involves self-assessment by the client, and often involves occupational exploration as well. Self-assessment, when properly carried out, can not only improve clients' job search efforts by clarifying what they can offer an employer, but also help to increase their self-esteem by helping them realize that they have knowledge and skills of potential value.

Once the client has established a goal, the next step is to determine whether any intermediate objectives will be necessary to accomplish it. Such objectives might include taking some special training, course of study, or getting some particular work experience in order to meet qualifications requirements to attain their goal. Of special importance is identifying alternative paths or patterns of objectives if there is, in fact, more than one way to reach the goal. Identifying alternative paths is a way of increasing the client's flexibility of action and thus improving the chances of reaching the goal.

With the goal and any intermediate objectives clearly in mind, the next step is to make specific plans to accomplish them. The initial, and quite crucial, task of client and counselor in action planning is identifying ALL of the viable alternatives available, or at least as many as possible. Such alternatives might include resigning from one's job to attend school full time, remaining on the job but becoming a part-time student, enrolling in a correspondence course, starting one's own business in one's spare time, etc. A very frequent mistake at this point is overlooking desirable alternatives. It is a common tendency for clients to allow their anxiety over making the "right" decision or their desperation to find work to cause them to lock in prematurely on more obvious alternatives and to overlook less obvious but potentially more desirable ones. The counselor, as an objective observer, can be especially helpful at this point.

Each alternative or option at a career decision point can be regarded as having its own PAYOFF, or something the individual stands to gain if successful; COST, or investment of time, energy, money, etc., which must be made whether or not one is successful; and RISK, or probability of success or failure. All of the available options must be compared by the client in terms of cost, risk, and potential payoff, and then one of them selected. The application of decision rules can facilitate this process of selection. One such rule is that, other things being equal, that option should be chosen which promises to carry one the farthest toward the goal in the shortest period of time and at the least cost. This rule seems

obvious, yet many people ignore it when, for example, they have more than one job offer and choose between them solely on the basis of highest salary, without considering that the job they have selected delays or side-tracks the accomplishment of their goal. Other decision rules include maximizing the number of choices at the next choice point, leaving oneself at least one "escape route", and optimizing cost, risk, and payoff in terms of the client's own value system. A counselor can also be quite helpful to the client in this process of weighing alternatives, applying decision rules, and making a choice.

Once the client has selected one of the available options, he or she should make specific, concrete plans to carry it out, and the plans should include a timetable. In this connection, counselors should be familiar with Campbell's (1974) discussion of setting goals in which he stresses the importance of very short-term plans, such as the next week or two, or the next fifteen minutes to an hour. It is very important for clients, especially dependent or indecisive ones, to begin taking immediate action toward their goal. In this phase of counseling, many clients are in need of various kinds of skills training. Counselors should be prepared to help clients learn job application procedures and the preparation of application forms, resumes and letters of application, effective job-hunting strategies, interview skills, assertiveness and self-confidence. Role-playing and role rehearsal using videotape recording and playback is extremely effective in this kind of training, if it is available.

The final steps in career management are taken by the client after counseling has been completed. Progress in carrying out one's plans should be monitored closely in order to avoid getting behind schedule, bogged down or side-tracked, and to anticipate potential obstacles in time to avoid them. Then when the next major decision point is encountered, the client repeats the career management process on his or her own. At this point, the career goal should be reassessed to see that it is still appropriate in the light of changing external circumstances and the client's personal growth. If so, the client proceeds to identify the options available at that point, select one, and pursue it to the next major decision point. If not, the client makes appropriate modifications to his or her goal before choosing and pursuing an available option.

Career crisis and change in later years can be extremely stressful and anxiety-provoking, especially for those individuals who are not adequately prepared. However, such stress and anxiety can be reduced and career change more rapidly accomplished through the career management process. The earlier in life this process of active management of one's career begins, the smoother will be the transitions and career shifts during one's working life. These principles can therefore be used with clients of any age. They have been found to work especially well with middle aged and older clients, because their readiness for counseling makes possible substantial change during relatively short-term counseling, and because their life experience adds dimension and depth to their self-assessment and skills identification. It is for this reason that we have used the career management model in designing this training program.

C. STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP JOB COUNSELING SESSIONS

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP

JOB COUNSELING

Session 1: Overview; Ice-Breaker; Self-Assessment of Abilities

OBJECTIVES:

- To present an overview of training objectives and activities.
- To allow trainers to get acquainted with group members, group members with trainers, and group members with each other.
- To begin building group cohesion.
- To initiate and model an open, supportive, informal group climate.
- To motivate group and foster commitment to training program.
- To foster appreciation of the importance of self-assessment in seeking a job.
- To introduce a self-assessment technique for identifying abilities.

AGENDA:

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF TRAINING PROGRAM (15 MINUTES)

   a. Introduce self to group.

   b. Present purpose of training: to help group members improve their job seeking skills.

      (1) Many people approach job seeking believing that they have little control over whether or not they can get a job.

      (2) However, it is possible for you to take an active role in your own job search and substantially increase your chances of getting hired.

      (3) Effective job seeking and job interviewing are skills which can be easily taught and learned.

      (4) Learning such skills in a group setting has been shown to be especially effective, because you can learn more by observing each other, by exchanging ideas with each other, and by supporting and encouraging each other.

      (5) If you use the skills you will learn in this training program, you will find that it will be much easier to get a job -- not just right now, but in the future as well.

c. Describe the structure of the training--eight two-hour sessions meeting once a week (or at whatever interval you have determined).

Session 1: Getting acquainted, and self-assessment of abilities.

Session 2: Self-assessment of personal strengths, and interview skills training.

Session 3: Self-assessment of interests, and more interview skills training.

Session 4: Self-assessment of values, and more interview skills training.

Session 5: Field surveys--finding out information about jobs and companies.

Session 6: Qualifications summary, and filling out applications.

Session 7: Job hunting strategies--developing leads, use of resumes and letters, importance of follow-up.

Session 8: Decision making.

d. Emphasize the importance of attending every session to get maximum benefit--each session builds on previous ones.

e. Give an overview of this session:

(1) Getting acquainted exercise

(2) Self-assessment of abilities

2. ICE-BREAKING EXERCISE: GET-ACQUAINTED INTERVIEWS (30 MINUTES)

(Be sure to have pencils available for trainees to use in this exercise.)

Divide the group into pairs of people who did not know one another previously, and distribute interview forms.* If there is an odd number of group members, trainer participates as a group member. When pairs have formed, have the group "count off" by twos, or use some other method to identify which member of a pair is #1 and which is #2. Explain the following procedure to the group.

#1 interviews #2 to get acquainted, using the interview form. The form is to be used as a guide--try to get all the information on the form, but any additional information a person is willing to share with the group is okay. It is also okay to decline to answer any quesion, if you do not wish to share any information with the group. After five minutes, switch roles, so that each person is interviewed.

At the completion of the interviews, each group member in turn introduces his/her partner to the group. If the trainer has participated, he/she goes first to model the appropriate behavior to the group. Allow not more than two minutes for each introduction.

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*Forms and worksheets are located at the end of each session.

(NOTE: This activity has been timed assuming that there are ten group members. If there are fewer than ten, you may consider increasing the time allowed for introductions, or you may use the extra time as a "cushion," in case some other activity runs overtime. If there are more than ten members, you may wish to cut down on the time allowed for interviews, or you may plan to make up for the extra time required by shortening a later activity.)

3. MINI-LECTURE: SELF-ASSESSMENT, WHY IT IS IMPORTANT (10 MINUTES)

   a. Self-assessment is a process of identifying who you are, what you can do, and what you have to offer a prospective employer. There are several important dimensions to be looked at in sizing yourself up. The ones we will be focusing on in this program are:

      (1) ACHIEVEMENTS--What are the things that you have done especially well in the past, things that you are proud of?

      (2) ABILITIES--What are the things you can do well; what skills, talents, special knowledge, etc., do you have to offer?

      (3) STRENGTHS--What are your strong points, the personal characteristics that make you strong and unique?

      (4) INTERESTS--What kind of activities do you like; what are the things that are fun for you, that you especially enjoy?

      (5) VALUES--What are the things that are important to you, the things you value in a job?

   b. Self-assessment is important to help you present yourself well to an employer.

      (1) Job interviewing is like selling; you are the product and the interviewer is the customer. You must be thoroughly familiar with your product in order to convince your customer to buy it.

      (2) DEMONSTRATION: Trainer assumes the role of a salesperson trying to sell a product--one which he/she knows little about. (This product can be any simple gadget of everyday use, such as a fountain pen, cigarette lighter, etc.) After one or two minutes, repeat the role play, but this time the trainer is very knowledgeable about the product and can give any information requested. After another one or two minutes, point out the difference it makes to know the product well.

   c. Self-assessment is also important to help you find a job that you will enjoy and to avoid work that would be unpleasant.

      (1) If you can find a job that is a good fit for your abilities and strengths, you will be able to do the work well.

      (2) Working in a job that you find interesting and important leads to greater job satisfaction.

      (3) If you find a job that you can do well and that you find satisfying, you will please your boss, progress faster, and eventually earn more money than in a job which does not fit you well.

4. BREAK (10 MINUTES)

5. SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND ABILITIES (45 MINUTES)

(Be sure to have pencils available for the group to use in this exercise.)

Divide the group into the same pairs as in the ice-breaking exercise and distribute the "Achievements" form. Ask participants to think back over their lives and recall as many highlights or achievements -- satisfying, successful experiences; times they really felt good about themselves -- as they can. These do not have to be job-related, but it is better if some of them are. The trainer should share with the group one of his or her own job-related achievements and a non-job-related one, as examples. Remind them to think of experiences that made them feel good, happy, proud, and/or successful, and tell them to list and describe the three most important ones in the appropriate spaces on the form. They should write just enough to identify the achievement and remind them of the experience.

After about TEN MINUTES, ask the group to stop writing. Then tell them to take turns sharing their achievements. Partner #1 shares his/her most important achievement with Partner #2 and tells why it is or was important to him/her, then #2 does the same for #1. Partner #1 then shares the next best achievement, and so on. Allow about FIVE MINUTES for this activity.

The trainer should next explain to the group the relationship between abilities and achievements. If they stop and think for a moment, they will realize that each of these achievements involved the use of some of their abilities. The next step in this activity is to have the group identify abilities which were involved in each achievement. To help them with the task, spend about FIVE MINUTES generating a list of various abilities. The trainer should suggest a few and then ask the group for ideas. Record the list on newsprint or on a blackboard. When the five-minute period has ended, distribute the "Abilities Involved in My Achievements" form. Tell the group to refer to their list of achievements and record brief descriptions of each on this form. Instruct the participants to consider Achievement 1, and, in the spaces below the broken line, list their abilities which were involved in that achievement. When they have finished, they should consider Achievement 2. Tell the trainees to first look at the abilities in the first column. If any of these abilities were also involved in the second achievement, they should be written on the same line in the second column. They should then think of other abilities involved in the second achievement and record those. Have the trainees repeat the process for Achievement 3. Be sure to tell the trainees that the list of abilities the group generated is not a complete list, but just a sample to start them thinking. Encourage participants to add to their lists any abilities they can think of, even though they may not be on the group's list. Allow about TEN MINUTES for this activity.

Ask the trainees to stop writing. Then tell them to take turns sharing their abilities with their partners. In each pair, #1 tells #2 which of his or her abilities were associated with the first achievement, then #2 does the same for #1. Parner #1 then shares the abilities associated with the next achievement, and so on. Allow about FIVE MINUTES for this activity.

The final task is to summarize the most important abilities. Participants should read across their forms and, in the fourth column, record their most important or strongest abilities. Abilities which have been listed more than once should be included. Participants may also include abilities which were mentioned only once, but which they feel are some of their strongest abilities. Allow them about FIVE MINUTES to work on this task.

6. CLOSURE (10 MINUTES)

   a. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: Tell the group to complete their abilities form. They should review each achievement, check that no related abilities were excluded, and complete the summary section. Emphasize the importance of bringing their forms with them to the next session.

   b. Review what was covered in this session.

   c. Look ahead to what will be done in the next session:

      (1) Self-assessment of personal strengths

      (2) Interview skills training

   d. Ask for the group's feedback on the first session.

   e. Remind the group of the time and date of the next meeting, and adjourn.

FORMS AND WORKSHEETS

FOR SESSION ONE

ICE-BREAKER: PAIRED INTERVIEW

Team up with someone else whom you do not know and "interview" the other person, using the following questions as a springboard. Take about 5 minutes for the interview, then switch roles and be interviewed by your partner.

The questions below may be used or other questions substituted by you and your partner. The objective is to find out about your partner's past work history and job interests, and be able to tell the group about them.

1. What kinds of work have you been involved in during your life? (Include both volunteer and paid jobs)

2. What job(s) did you like best and why?

3. What job(s) did you like least and why?

4. Assuming you had the qualifications and opportunity to do so, what job would you consider to be the "perfect" job for you? (Use your imagination--it doesn't have to be practical or realistic!)

5. What would motivate you in your "perfect" job--money, power, status, recognition, flexibility, opportunity for advancement, facilities, private office, location, etc.?

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Identify the achievement:

Why was this achievement important to you? What do you remember about the experience?

2. Identify the achievement:

Why was this achievement important to you? What do you remember about the experience?

3. Identify the achievement:

Why was this achievement important to you? What do you remember about the experience?

ABILITIES INVOLVED IN MY ACHIEVEMENTS

1.*	2.	3.	SUMMARY OF MY MOST IMPORTANT ABILITIES**

*Brief description of the achievements.

**Those listed most often and/or those that I consider to be most important.

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP

JOB COUNSELING

Session 2: Self-Assessment of Strengths;
Interview Skills: Starting the Interview

OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce a self-assessment technique for identifying personal strengths.
- To provide an understanding of the purpose and stages of a job interview.
- To provide training and practice in basic interviewing skills: breaking the ice by engaging in small talk.

AGENDA:

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

   a. Introduce any new members of the group.

   b. Briefly review what was covered in the previous session.

   c. Preview what will be covered in this session.

2. REVIEW OF HOMEWORK (15 MINUTES)

Divide the group into the same pairs they worked in last session, making adjustments for new and/or absent members. Ask them to take out their "Abilities" form which they were to have completed at home between sessions. If anyone forgot to bring his/her form, let them work from memory. Give the group FIVE MINUTES in which the partners in each pair can share with each other their two strongest abilities, and what they learned about themselves through their self-assessment of abilities.

Following this, form the group again and have each member in turn tell the group his or her partner's two strongest abilities. Allow only about one minute for each one to speak, or a total of about TEN MINUTES.

3. SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE: STRENGTHS (30 MINUTES)

(Be sure to have pencils available for the group to use in this exercise.)

Explain to the group that this exercise is going to focus on personal strengths. All of us have strengths, which are numerous and differing personal

characteristics that help us "shine" in one way or another. Taken together our strong points make us more suited for some kinds of jobs than others. Everybody is different; we all have our own personal set of strong points. And everybody is a valuable person just because he or she is different from everybody else.

Tell the group that they are going to identify which of their strengths were involved in each achievement. To help them with this task, spend about FIVE MINUTES generating a list of positive characteristics or strengths. The trainer should begin by listing a few personal strengths which were involved in one of his or her achievements, and then ask the group for other strengths. If the group finds this difficult, suggest a few categories in which some strengths may fall (e.g., characteristics which enable them to work well with or for other people, characteristics which describe their work habits, etc.). Record the list on newsprint or on a blackboard.

When the five-minute period has ended, divide the group into pairs and distribute the "Personal Strengths Involved in My Achievements" form. Tell the participants to refer to their list of achievements and record brief descriptions of each on this form. Instruct them to consider Achievement [1], and, in the spaces below the broken line, list their personal strengths which were involved in that achievement. When they have finished, they should consider Achievement [2]. Tell the trainees to first look at the strengths in the first column. If any of these strengths were also involved in the second achievement, they should be written on the same line in the second column. They should then think of other strengths involved in the second achievement and record those. Have the trainees repeat the process for Achievement [3], looking first at the strengths which have been recorded already. Be sure to tell the participants that the list of strengths the group generated is not a complete list, but just a sample to start them thinking about their own individual characteristics. Encourage participants to add to their lists any strengths they can think of, even though they may not be on the group's list.

After about TEN MINUTES, ask the trainees to stop writing. Allow another FIVE MINUTES for them to take turns sharing with their partners which of their strong points is involved in each achievement.

When the time is up, ask for the group's attention. Instruct them to summarize their most important personal strengths, as they did their abilities in the previous session. Allow about FIVE MINUTES for them to work on this task, and tell them that they may complete the exercise at home.

4. BREAK (10 MINUTES)

5. MINI-LECTURE: PREPARING FOR THE JOB INTERVIEW (10 MINUTES)

The job interview is a rather brief interaction between two strangers in which a lot of information about education, work, and personal concerns must be discussed. The goals of the interviewer are to find out enough about the qualifications of the applicant to determine whether he or she meets the qualifications of the job opening and to compare him or her with all the other applicants for the same job, and to provide the applicant with sufficient information about the job and company to answer his or her questions and to leave a favorable impression. The goals of the applicant are to impress the interviewer with his or her assets, abilities and strengths as they relate to the open job, and to find out sufficient information about the job and company to make a decision in case a job offer is received.

Many research projects have been carried out to determine how interviewers, good and bad, make their decisions in an employment interview, and the major findings were:

(1) Interviewers develop a stereotype of a good candidate and seek to match persons and stereotype often in spite of their qualifications.

(2) A bias is established early in the interview (as early as the first three or four minutes), and this tends to be followed by a favorable or unfavorable decision.

(3) Interviewers are more influenced by unfavorable information than by favorable information.

Knowing this, there are things you can do to prepare for job interviews which can help you establish a good first impression and continue it throughout the interview. One purpose of this training program is to have you learn and practice some of these things.

In preparing for job interviews, it is helpful to know what is likely to happen in them. Unfortunately job interviews are not standard, but will differ depending upon the skills of each interviewer and the way he or she prefers to go about it. However, it is possible to define four stages of an interview, and most interviews will progress through all four stages (McGovern, 1978).

STAGE 1: BREAKING THE ICE. Because the interview involves two strangers meeting for the first time, the interviewer will usually take responsibility for engaging in small talk to "break the ice," and the applicant should be responsive to this in order to create a good first impression. Even though you may have an urge to get down to business right away, you should not give in to it or feel impatient with the interviewer. Small talk serves the purpose of relaxing both participants and getting them comfortable with each other, and this helps make it easier to have good communication later on in the interview. There is something you can do during the small talk to help create a favorable first impression, and that is to say something positive or complimentary about the company, the interviewer, his or her office, etc. We'll talk more about that later.

STAGE 2: SHARING GENERAL INFORMATION. Once the interview has gotten off the ground with small talk, the interviewer will move into the second stage, which focuses on a mutual sharing of information. This will usually begin by the interviewer giving some background information on the overall organization and the specific job for which this interview is being held. Then he or she begins asking questions to gather more and more concrete information about the applicant. You should view this as your first opportunity to give the interviewer important information about yourself. Remembering that the interviewer is interested in matching the best applicant to the position, you need to be aware of the job requirements and to tell the interviewer of your specific skills or experience which meets them. Concise self-statements provide the interviewer with the best data for judging your resourcefulness and self-confidence.

STAGE 3: AMPLIFYING AND SHARPENING THE FOCUS. During this stage, good interviewers will focus on more critical information. This may be a more detailed description of qualifications, or an exploration of why the applicant is interested in this job or feels he or she is well-qualified for it. It is at this point that the applicant can take more and more control of the interview. In addition to providing broader and deeper information about your qualifications, you can also ask direct questions about the job and its potential to meet your own needs. Don't be afraid to do this, because you will be showing the interviewer genuine interest, ethusiasm and independence and at the same time you are getting necessary information to make a decision.

STAGE 4: TYING THINGS TOGETHER. The final stage of an interview allows both participants to clarify any needed information and make some closing comments which tie the interview together. Both you and the interviewer may want to summarize your impressions and reactions to the interview. You can seek information concerning what will happen next in the recruitment process, such as when and how you will be notified of a decision. Finally, if you are still really interested in the job, you can let the interviewer know.

There are some things you should do in advance of an interview in order to be better prepared to make a good impression. These are:

(1) Find out as much as you can about the nature of the job and the organization which is interviewing you. The more you know, the better you will be able to relate your qualifications to the job and organization.

(2) Do some "personal homework". Sit down with pencil and paper and identify the specific skills and abilities you have which relate to the job and organization, and how you can demonstrate that you have them by your education, work experience, or life experience.

(3) Try to find out how to dress in order to make the most favorable impression on the interviewer. Even though the definition of "acceptable dress" has broadened in recent years, interviewers still tend to be fairly conservative in their tastes.

(4) This is the most important suggestion: PRACTICE!! We will be talking more about this later in the training.

6. INTERVIEW SKILLS PRACTICE: STARTING THE INTERVIEW (40 MINUTES)

a. MODELING (10 MINUTES). Pick a member of the group or ask for a volunteer to assist you with a demonstration. You play the role of a job interviewer, and the group member plays the role of the job applicant. Tell the group that the two of you are going to role play the beginning of the interview. Spend about one or two minutes engaging the applicant in small talk, then

stop the role play and ask the group to tell the person playing the job applicant the things he or she did well. Be sure to reinforce each one who does so by saying "Good!" or "Yes!" or "That's fine!" or "Thank you!" After one or two minutes, you point out to the job applicant any behaviors which the group may have missed, and make any suggestions you may have about different behaviors he/she might want to try.

Next, have the volunteer think of something positive or some complimentary remark to say during the small talk. If he/she has trouble thinking of something, ask the group to help. If the group has trouble, you make a suggestion. Then practice the role play again, this time instructing the applicant to be sure to make the remark during the small talk. Spend about two or three minutes repeating the role play, then allow about two or three minutes for feedback.

b. BEHAVIOR REHEARSAL (30 MINUTES). Divide the group into triads. (If the group is short one person, you can participate; or, have just one pair containing the group member who role-played with you in the beginning. If there is one person too many, let the group member you role played with just observe.) The roles of applicant, interviewer, and observer are rotated within each triad.

The interviewer engages the applicant in small talk for three minutes. Instruct the applicants to think of some compliment or positive comment to make during the small talk. When three minutes are up, allow five to seven minutes for the observer and interviewer to give feedback, and for general discussion of the role play in the triads.

The roles are rotated and the procedure is repeated (twice).

NOTE: It is important to begin now to establish a POSITIVE approach to giving feedback. Emphasize that the observer and interviewer should focus on telling the applicant what he or she is doing WELL. Also, discourage the group from commenting on what an individual is doing wrong. Point out that it is much more helpful, instead, to tell someone some different behavior to try. That way, the emphasis is upon the positive instead of the negative.

At the conclusion of the exercise, re-form the large group.

7. CLOSURE (10 MINUTES)

a. Allow for discussion of the previous exercise; ask if any group members want to share their feelings or reactions with the group.

b. Review what was covered in this session.

c. Preview what will be done next session:

(1) Self-assessment of interests

(2) Interview skills training: giving and receiving information

d. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

(1) Complete your personal strengths form and identify your most important strengths.

(2) Think about a job you would like to apply for, and make a list of skills, abilities, and personal strengths which are related to that job.

(3) Practice making small talk with people, and making positive or complimentary statements.

e. Ask for the group's feedback on this session.

f. Remind the group of the time and date of the next meeting, and to bring with them their abilities and strengths lists, then adjourn.

FORMS AND WORKSHEETS

FOR SESSION TWO

PERSONAL STRENGTHS INVOLVED IN MY ACHIEVEMENTS

1.*	2.	3.	SUMMARY OF MY MOST IMPORTANT PERSONAL STRENGTHS**

*Brief description of the achievements.

**Those listed most often and/or those that I consider to be most important.

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP

JOB COUNSELING

Session 3: Self-Assessment of Interests;
Interview Skills: Giving Positive Information

OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce a self-assessment technique for identifying interests.
- To provide training and practice in interviewing skills: giving and receiving information.

AGENDA:

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

   a. Briefly review what was covered in the previous session.

   b. Give group members the opportunity to share experiences concerning making small talk and complimentary statements between sessions. If it appears that any have not done so, stress the importance of between-sessions practice.

   c. Preview what will be covered in this session.

2. REVIEW OF HOMEWORK (20 MINUTES)

Ask the group to take out their personal strengths form from the last session, which they were to have completed at home. Remind them that each one was to have identified his or her most important strengths. Instruct the group that you are going to spend some time having each person tell the group what his or her most important strengths are. Each member in turn will have one minute to describe his or her most important strengths. Tell them that you will time them and call time at the end of one minute. Emphasize that they MUST fill one minute, and that if they run out of strengths to talk about, they can talk about their abilities. During this exercise, make it a special point to model and to facilitate giving compliments and positive feedback to each group leader.

When everyone has had a turn, give the group a minute or two to express how they felt about this exercise.

3. SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE: INTERESTS (30 MINUTES)

(Be sure to have pencils available for the group to use in this exercise.)

Divide the group into pairs. Encourage them to select a partner whom they have not worked with before.

Explain to the group that this exercise is going to focus on interests. We all know certain activities we like to do, that are interesting to us. Occupational interests are those activities, jobs, or job fields in which we enjoy working.

Interests are not the same as abilities. Abilities are things which we CAN do well; interests are things we LIKE to do. To be sure, there are some things we can do well which we also enjoy doing. But there are also things we are able to do that we don't like to do very much. For example, I can do an excellent job of washing dishes, but I certainly don't enjoy doing it! Also, all of us very likely have things which are interesting to us, but which we don't have the abilities to do. For me, one of these is flying an airplane. I don't know how to do it now, but I hope to learn someday. (NOTE: Trainer, substitute your own examples here.)

Interests are related to job satisfaction. If you can find work which is interesting--which fits your interest pattern well--you are much more likely to enjoy your work. Knowing your interest pattern can be helpful even if your job is not especially interesting, because interests can be pursued as hobbies or after-work activities. In fact, there are some people who choose routine boring work just because it provides them with the time and money to pursue their interests in their leisure time.

Tell the group that they are going to identify which of their interests were involved in each of their achievements. To help them with this task, spend about FIVE MINUTES generating a list of interests. The trainer should begin by listing a few interests which were involved in one of his or her achievements, and then ask the group for other interests. Some of the abilities listed in the first session may be used for ideas about interests. The trainer may list a few occupational interest fields if the group is having a difficult time with this task (e.g., science, art, business, sales). Record the list on newsprint or on a blackboard.

Distribute the "Interests Involved in My Achievements" form. Tell the participants to refer to their list of achievements and record brief descriptions of each on this form. Instruct them to consider Achievement [1], and, in the spaces below the broken line, list their interests which were involved in that achievement. When they have finished, they should consider Achievement [2]. Tell the trainees to look first at the interests in the first column. If any of these interests were also involved in the second achievement, they should be written on the same line in the second column. They should then think of other interests involved in the second achievement and record those. Have the group repeat the process for Achievement [3], looking first at the interests which have been recorded already. Be sure to remind the group that the list of interests they generated is not a complete list, but just a sample to start them thinking about their own interests.

After about TEN MINUTES, ask the trainees to stop writing. Allow another FIVE MINUTES for them to share with their partners which of their interests are involved in each achievement.

When the time is up, ask for the group's attention. Instruct them to summarize their most important interests, as they did their abilities and strengths in previous sessions. Allow about FIVE MINUTES for this task, and tell participants that they may complete the exercise at home.

4. BREAK (10 MINUTES)

5. MINI-LECTURE: GIVING INFORMATION IN THE JOB INTERVIEW (5 MINUTES)

You will remember that the purpose of the job interview is to permit the interviewer and applicant to exchange enough information to determine whether the applicant is a good fit for the job. You will also recall that interviewers tend to form early impressions that last throughout the interview, and that they are more influenced by unfavorable information than by favorable information. As an applicant, you want to establish and maintain a good impression throughout the interview. One way to do this is to flood the interviewer with favorable information. Whenever you are asked a question, you want to make sure that your answer contains the most favorable information you can give about yourself. You also want to look for any opportunity to appropriately interject favorable information.

It is for this reason that doing your "homework" before going on a job interview is so important. One thing you need to do is to find out all you can about the nature of the job and the organization that is interviewing you. The more you know about the job and the organization, the easier it will be for you to relate your own qualifications to them. Also, it can help you to determine something positive or complimentary to say about the company during the small talk stage of the interview.

Another important part of your "homework" is to sit down with what you have found out about the job, and make a list of all of your experience, skills, abilities, and knowledge which relate to the job and organization. Try to figure out in advance all of the things you want to say about yourself. It may help to actually make an outline of things you want to say if you get a chance. Then try to think of questions the job interviewer might ask you, and write down answers to these questions. The reason for all this writing is not so that you can take it with you to the interview and read it to the interviewer! It's just that writing things down helps you to remember them better.

When writing down your skills and abilities in relation to the job, it is important to think in terms of achievements, accomplishments, responsibilities, things you have done especially well, rather than just your duties in each of your jobs. The interviewer is interested in what you can do in the job for which you are being interviewed. The best indication of what you can do in a new job is the record of things you have done in the past. The best way to get this across is by making "I" statements about your achievements, accomplishments, responsibilities, etc., especially what others thought of those things. For example, in my own case, instead of saying that one of my jobs involved recruiting and placing management level employees, it would be better to say, "I developed, established, and ran the first full-time management recruiting program for an industrial plant of 6,600 employees. I filled an average of 75 job openings per year, many of which were engineering jobs, at a time when engineers were in great demand. The usual average for a management recruiter at that time was around 50 jobs filled per year." (NOTE: Trainer, substitute your own example here.)

Still another thing you can do to improve your interview performance is to practice. I am soon going to pass out a list of commonly asked interview questions. It can be very helpful before an interview to take this list of questions and decide how you would answer them if they were asked in the interview. You might wish to write down answers to the questions and practice saying those things. Don't memorize them, just get an idea of what you want to say and say it. It can also be very helpful to get a friend to role play some interviews with you by asking you these questions, so that you can practice answering them the way you would in an actual job interview. The next exercise will illustrate how you can practice these skills by role playing.

6. INTERVIEW SKILLS PRACTICE: GIVING POSITIVE INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF (40 MINUTES)

(Be sure to have paper and pencils available for the group to use in this exercise.)

a. PREPARATION (5 MINUTES). Distribute the list of questions frequently asked during job interviews. Tell the group members that they are going to have FIVE MINUTES to practice doing "homework" in preparation for a job interview. Ask them to imagine that they are going to be interviewed for a job just like their present or most recent one. They are to think of how, in such a situation, they would answer Question #1 on the handout concerning their present or most recent job, and their next most recent job. Remind them to think of accomplishments, responsibilities, skills, things they have done well, etc., and tell them that they may wish to make notes. Ask them also to think of how they would answer Questions #2 and #3. Explain that when time is up, they will begin practicing interview skills, concentrating on making positive "I" statements.

b. MODELING (5 MINUTES). Ask for a volunteer, or pick a member of the group to assist you with a demonstration. You play the role of a job interviewer, and the group member plays the role of the applicant. Tell the applicant to pretend he or she is applying for a job like her/his present or most recent job. Explain that the interview is already in progress, and that you are going to start Stage 2 by asking Question #1 for his/her most recent job. Carry out the role play for about TWO MINUTES, then devote the rest of the time to giving feedback. Model giving feedback focused upon things the interviewee did well, especially positive self-statements.

c. BEHAVIOR REHEARSAL (30 MINUTES). Divide the group into triads as in the last session, but this time encourage them to try to work with people they have not worked with before. The roles of applicant, interviewer, and observer are to be rotated within each triad.

The interviewer interviews the applicant for FIVE MINUTES by asking Question #1 on the handout for the person's two most recent jobs, then asking Question #2, then Question #3, as time allows. When time is called, allow another FIVE MINUTES for the observers and interviewers to give feedback to the applicants.

The roles are rotated and the procedure is repeated (twice).

At the conclusion of the exercise, re-form the large group.

7. CLOSURE (10 MINUTES)

   a. Allow for discussion of the previous exercise.

   b. Review what was covered in the session.

   c. Preview what will be done next session:

      (1) Self-assessment of values

      (2) Interview skills training: nonverbal communication in the job interview.

   d. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

      (1) Complete your "Interests" form and identification of your most important interests.

      (2) Prepare to tell the group next time about your interests OFF the job, and which of your abilities and personal strengths are involved.

      (3) Practice making positive "I" statements in job interviews or whenever you have the opportunity, and come back next time prepared to share your experiences and problems, if any.

   e. Ask for the group's feedback on this session.

   f. Remind the group of the time and date of the next meeting, and to bring all their materials with them, then adjourn.

FORMS AND WORKSHEETS

FOR SESSION THREE

INTERESTS INVOLVED IN MY ACHIEVEMENTS

1.*	2.	3.	SUMMARY OF MY MOST IMPORTANT INTERESTS**

*Brief description of the achievements.

**Those listed most often and/or those that I consider to be most important.

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED

DURING JOB INTERVIEWS

1. (A question like this will usually be asked about each job you've had.) What were your job title, your dates of employment, and the things you did in this job? What did you like most about it? What did you like least about it?

2. How did you do in school in courses related to this job? How were your grades overall in school?

3. What have you learned from your previous work experience?

4. In what kinds of jobs are you most interested?

5. What led you to choose your particular field? What do you like about it? What don't you like about it?

6. What are the most important considerations for you in choosing a job?

7. What kinds of courses have you taken that you think prepared you for this occupation?

8. Why are you interested in our company?

9. Do you have any geographical preferences about where you work?

10. What do you see yourself doing five years from now? Ten years from now?

11. If you are married, how does your spouse view your job?

12. How do you spend your leisure time? Hobbies?

13. What would you say is your strongest attribute? What is your weakest point?

14. Have you ever had any problems interacting with fellow workers?

15. What are your ideas on salary? How much money do you want to be earning 10 years from now?

16. What do you think that you can contribute to our company that would make us want to hire you?

17. Were you ever fired from a job? Did you ever quit a job? Why?

18. Are there any questions that you want to ask?

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP

JOB COUNSELING

Session 4: Self-Assessment of Values;
Interview Skills: Nonverbal Communication

OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce a self-assessment technique for identifying values.
- To provide training and practice in interviewing skills: Nonverbal communication.

AGENDA:

1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF HOMEWORK (25 MINUTES)

   a. Briefly review what was covered in the last session.

   b. Preview what will be covered in this session.

   c. Take about THREE OR FOUR MINUTES to give group members the opportunity to share experiences about practicing positive "I" statements between sessions. If it appears that any have not done so, once again stress the importance of between-session practice.

   d. Have each group member in turn share with the group what his or her off-the-job interests are, and which of his or her abilities and personal strengths are involved in these interests. Model and facilitate giving compliments and positive feedback to each group member, adding abilities or strengths they may have overlooked. Allow about TWO MINUTES per member for this activity.

      When everyone has had a turn, give the group a minute or two to express how they felt about this exercise.

2. SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE: VALUES (30 MINUTES)

   (Be sure to have pencils available for the group to use in this exercise.)

Explain to the group that this exercise is going to focus upon values. Values represent those things in life which are most important to us. They are the inner signposts which guide our lives. When we decide whether something is good or bad, right or wrong, etc., we usually make such judgments in terms of our values.

There are as many sets of values as there are people on earth. Each of us has his or her own value system. It is important to consider our values as they relate to our work. Some of us want money and recognition in our jobs; others want short hours, peace, and privacy. How happy or satisfied we are on the job is partly a

result of how well it fits our value system. This exercise is going to help you identify the most important values in your value system.

Tell the group that they are going to identify which of their values were involved in each achievement. To help them with this task, spend about FIVE MINUTES generating a list of values which relate to work. The trainer should begin by listing a few values which were involved in one of his or her achievements, and then ask the group for other values. If the group finds this difficult, suggest a few categories in which work-related and non-work-related values may fall (e.g., work or leisure environment, relationships with other people, structured vs. flexible schedules, etc.). Record all values on newsprint or on a blackboard.

Divide the group into pairs, encouraging participants to select a new partner. Distribute the "Values Involved in My Achievements" form. Tell the group to refer to their list of achievements and record brief descriptions of each on this form. Instruct them to consider Achievement [1], and, in the spaces below the broken line, list their values which were involved in that achievement. When they have finished, they should consider Achievement [2]. Tell the trainees to first look at the values in the first column. If any of these values were also involved in the second achievement, they should be written on the same line in the second column. They should then think of other values involved in the second achievement and record those. Have the trainees repeat the process for Achievement [3]. Remind them that the list of values the group generated is not a complete list, but just a sample to start them thinking about their own value system.

After about TEN MINUTES, ask the trainees to stop writing. Allow another FIVE MINUTES for them to share with their partners which of their values were involved in their achievements.

When the time is up, ask for the group's attention. Instruct them to summarize their most important values, as they did their abilities, strengths, and interests in previous sessions. Allow about FIVE MINUTES for them to work on this task, and tell them that they may complete the exercise at home.

3. BREAK (10 MINUTES)

4. MINI-LECTURE: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE JOB INTERVIEW (10 MINUTES)

Nonverbal communication, or communicating other than in words, is a basic part of how we get our meaning across to each other. It is impossible not to communicate! Even when we are not actually talking, every movement we make, every facial expression, even the fact that we are silent, says something to the other person. As we grow up in this society, we learn to pay attention mainly to the words we say to each other, and most of us aren't very much aware of what impact our nonverbal communications have on others. To be most effective in a job interview, you should be aware of your own nonverbal messages and the nonverbal communication of the interviewer at all stages of the interview process. Frequently, how you say something creates more of an impression than the words you use.

Nonverbal communication includes eye contact, facial expression, head and body movements, and voice quality. Eye contact communicates interest in the interview and confidence in yourself. When you are interested in what the interviewer is saying, and interested in what you are saying to him or her, you will look at him or her. If you don't look at the interviewer, he or she will think you are not really interested in the available position or in the company, or that you lack confidence in what you are saying. On the other hand, if you stare

or look too hard at an interviewer, it looks demanding and may make him or her feel ill-at-ease.

A confident job applicant will have relaxed facial expressions. Facial expressions, along with firm eye contact, can communicate interest in the interview.

Head and body movements, and the position of the interviewee's body relative to the interviewer, also give the interviewer information. A confident applicant will lean slightly forward and will use slow, easy gestures.

Voice quality is another important aspect of nonverbal communication in an interview. The applicant's voice should be appropriately loud for the situation. A confident interviewee's speech pattern is clear and steady, and key words are emphasized.

A person's nonverbal communication sometimes contradicts his or her words. This results in a confusing message and the interviewer is not likely to be positively influenced. For example, an applicant may state that she has confidence in her ability to supervise others, but her statement is difficult to believe when she is looking at the floor and wringing her hands. When nonverbal messages agree with verbal statements, the overall communication is much stronger.

When you use your nonverbal messages to make your verbal communication more effective, interviewers will have a better understanding of your abilities. Also, if you're aware of the interviewer's nonverbal communication, you'll have some clues about how well you're doing and you'll be able to change your behavior, if necessary.

5. INTERVIEW SKILLS PRACTICE: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION (40 MINUTES)

Divide the group into triads. Instruct participants to select roles: interviewer, applicant, observer. The applicant sets up the scene by briefly describing the type of job for which he or she is applying and the company or organization which the interviewer is to represent. The interviewer then asks the applicant questions from the list of questions frequently asked during job interviews (which was distributed during the previous session). Since the first few questions on the list were used in role plays in Session Three, the interviewer should begin with question four or five. The interview should be stopped after FIVE MINUTES. The triad then spends a few minutes processing the interaction, with the observer providing objective feedback about the applicant's nonverbal communication.

Roles are rotated so that each participant has the opportunity to play each role. At the conclusion of the interviews (30 MINUTES), re-form the large group and discuss the participants' experiences and reactions.

5. CLOSURE (10 MINUTES)

a. Allow for reactions to the day's exercises.

b. Preview what will be covered in the next session:

(1) field survey - theory and techniques

(2) interview skills training:
preparing for and handling difficult questions

c. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

(1) Complete self-assessment of values and exercise.

(2) Review the results of the self-assessment exercises: interests, strengths, abilities, and values, and record the results on the summary form (distribute the form when this assignment is made). Based on your review of your personal assets, list your 3 or 4 strongest "selling points," and prepare a 30-second "commercial" marketing yourself to potential employers. These "commercials" will be shared at the opening of the next session.

d. Remind the group of the time and date of the next meeting, and what to bring with them, then adjourn.

FORMS AND WORKSHEETS

FOR SESSION FOUR

VALUES INVOLVED IN MY ACHIEVEMENTS

1.*	2.	3.	SUMMARY OF MY MOST IMPORTANT VALUES**

*Brief description of the achievements.

**Those listed most often and/or those that I consider to be most important.

SUMMARY OF SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

My Most Important Abilities	My Most Important Personal Strengths	My Most Important Interests	My Most Important Values

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP

JOB COUNSELING

Session 5: Field Surveys; Interview Skills: Responding to Difficult Questions

OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce the concept of the field survey and the rationale for its use.
- To encourage creative approaches to the field survey.
- To develop skill in responding to difficult questions in the job interview situation.

AGENDA:

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

   a. Briefly review what was covered in the previous session.

   b. Preview what will be covered in this session.

2. REVIEW OF HOMEWORK (20 MINUTES)

Have each member in turn share with the group his or her 30-second "commercial" emphasizing their strongest selling points. The facilitator should initiate the procedure, sharing his/her own "commercial" and modeling an appropriate response. The time allotted to each group member should be monitored by the facilitator, and all "commercials" should receive positive feedback.

3. MINI-LECTURE: THE FIELD SURVEY (15 MINUTES)

The more you know about a job before you go in to apply, the greater your chances for getting that job. The process of finding out as much as you can about a job is called a "field survey."

Many larger companies have pamphlets or brochures describing their organization. These may be obtained directly from the company. If you can demonstrate to the interviewer that you have "done your homework," and are interested enough in his/her company to have done some background research, he/she will be favorably impressed. On the other hand, showing no knowledge of an organization and its products or service communicates a lack of interest. Researching an organization insures that you are applying for the right position, and will also allow you to let the interviewer know that you are interested in THAT COMPANY, and not simply in "a job."

Written information is only one source. Also, it has been shown that only 20% of available jobs are advertised. Most positions are filled through an informal network, often by word of mouth. Talking with people in the field will round out and up-date the literature you have read, is an excellent way for you to meet people in the organization, and will get you into the "network." This is called an "informational interview," and it serves three basic functions:

1. To find out more information about employers.
2. To find out about job possibilities now and in the future.
3. To develop a chain of referrals (personal contacts).

Building a chain of referrals is probably one of the most important aspects of your job search. Once you have talked with someone in an information-seeking interview, you should always ask, "Can you tell me the names of other people who are doing the kind of work you do, and how might I get in touch with them? May I say that you suggested I contact them?"

In almost all situations, the person you have talked with will know other people in that particular organization or comparable organizations who are nearby and can provide equally useful information. You can use one person to lead you to another, and the personal referral is the most likely way to get inside.

It is important to pursue this chain of referrals because one person will not be able to tell you everything about a certain occupation, and you will want to avoid being too influenced by his or her particular biases.

Remember, you must get in to see the people who are actually connected with the organization that interests you most. Only by talking personally with the people who are "insiders" will you have a shot at job opportunities when they become available.

There are two types of informational interviews: with potential employers and with people who are working in a job that you think you would like. Interviews with potential employers probably will be more formal; it will be necessary to set up an appointment, and explain the purpose of your visit (i.e., to find out more about the company). Setting up these interviews will take initiative and a little bit of courage on your part, but most employers are proud of their company and will be pleased to have the opportunity to talk with someone who is interested in their work. Everyone likes to feel important, and your interest will be very flattering.

Talking with employees need not be as formal. Again, most people are more than willing to talk about their work, but it is up to you to make the first step. Once you get into the network, of course, you can use the network to set up interviews: "John Doe suggested that it would be helpful to me to talk with you."

At this point the facilitator will distribute two handouts, Suggested Questions to a Potential Employer and Suggested Questions for an Interview with Someone in a Job You Would Like. Allow time for the group to scan the handouts and ask questions.

4. FIELD SURVEY MODELING (5 MINUTES)

Select a volunteer from the group to play the role of a person working in a job you would like. The facilitator role plays contacting that person to set up an informational interview. The modeling should emphasize techniques for explaining the rationale for the interview and why the prospective employee is particularly interested in talking with that person.

5. GROUP EXERCISE: BRAINSTORMING INFORMATION-SEEKING STRATEGIES (15 MINUTES)

A newsprint pad or chalkboard will be necessary. The rules of brainstorming will be presented to the group (i.e., any suggestion is o.k., no evaluation is allowed),*and the group is asked to brainstorm potential strategies to find out information about a company prior to applying for the job. The facilitator may need to "prime the pump" by providing one or two alternatives from the mini-lecture. Each suggestion from the group should be positively reinforced and listed on the board.

After about 10 minutes, the leader should summarize the major strategies generated by the brainstorm; it should be emphasized that creative and nontraditional approaches of entry into the job network are very often the most effective.

6. BREAK (10 MINUTES)

7. MINI-LECTURE: ANSWERING HARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Which of us has not had a job interview in which we were made very uncomfortable by a difficult or embarrassing question? Sometimes it is a thought-provoking question we had not anticipated, such as, "What do you need to know in order to determine whether or not you'll be able to handle this job?" Sometimes it is a question which, if we answer truthfully, will make us look bad, such as, "Have you ever been fired from a job?" Sometimes it is an illegal question, such as "Did you have trouble with the police as a youngster?" (Refusing to answer such a question, even though it is illegal, can work against you in the interview.)

As you will recall, in Session 3 we stressed the importance of doing your "homework" before going to a job interview. This involves finding out as much as you can about the job and the company, as well as identifying all of your skills, abilities, knowledge, experience, and strengths which are likely to be of interest to the interviewer. Such "homework" can be especially helpful in handling difficult or embarrassing questions.

Also in Session 3, you learned how to make positive "I" statements about your background and qualifications for a job. Handling difficult questions is just another way to use such positive "I" statements. The main reason difficult questions are difficult is that they may reveal weaknesses to the interviewer. However, positive "I" statements can be used to reduce the impact of adverse information, or even to turn weaknesses into strengths. For example, a person who did not take high school seriously and got poor grades might explain how he or she has since come to realize the value of a good education and is taking

*Distribute "Rules for Brainstorming" handout at this point.

courses in night school and doing much better work. Or a person who has been in prison has learned his or her lesson and is now a better citizen because of it (with examples of accomplishments which demonstrate how).

The basic principle in dealing with difficult questions is to answer them truthfully, but use them as an opportunity to tell the interviewer something else positive about yourself. Truthfulness is important, because interviewers are often quite skillful at determining when applicants are not being truthful, and misrepresenting qualifications can get a person fired, even if they are successful in getting the job. However, it is only necessary to give the interviewer sufficient information to answer the question, and going into excessive detail can very often hurt you more than help you.

Let's share some ideas about how to deal with a particular hard question. Suppose an interviewer says, "You seem to have had quite a few jobs. Can you explain why there's been so much change?" How could a person use this question as an opportunity to relate positive information?

(Allow TWO OR THREE MINUTES for the group to discuss alternative answers to this question.)

8. INTERVIEW SKILLS PRACTICE: DEALING WITH HARD QUESTIONS (35 MINUTES)

(Be sure to have paper and pencils available for the group to use in this exercise.)

a. PREPARATION (15 MINUTES). Divide the group into triads. Distribute the list of difficult interview questions. Instruct the group that one person in the triad should pick a question from the list to work on, then all three members discuss possible ways to answer the question to offset any adverse information and make it positive. Next, the second person in the triad picks a question which is worked on, then the third person, and so on. They should continue until time is called.

b. BEHAVIOR REHEARSAL (20 MINUTES). In these interview role plays, the group will practice answering difficult questions. The roles of applicant, interviewer, and observer will be rotated in each triad. The interviewer interviews the applicant for THREE MINUTES, selecting appropriate questions from the difficult questions list. When time is called, allow another THREE MINUTES for observer and interviewer to give feedback to applicant. The roles are rotated and the procedure is repeated (twice).

At the conclusion of the exercise, re-form the large group.

9. CLOSURE (10 MINUTES)

a. Allow for discussion of previous exercise.

b. Review what was covered in this session.

c. Preview what will be done next session:

(1) Sharing information obtained in field surveys.

(2) Preparation and use of a qualifications summary.

d. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: Each person is to do at least one field survey. Have each member survey a job that is of particular interest to her or him, but try to make assignments to facilitate diversity, to maximize usefulness of information to group as a whole.

e. Ask for the group's feedback on this session.

f. Remind the group of the time and date of the next meeting, and what to bring with them, then adjourn.

FORMS AND WORKSHEETS

FOR SESSION FIVE

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER:

1. What are the most common positions available to someone with my background?

2. Are there other kinds of positions in your organization for someone with my background?

3. What qualities are most important in your employees?

4. What is the competition like? What qualifications do you look for (work experience, leadership, etc.)?

5. What level of demand is exerted upon an employee? To what degree is there "pressure" in an organization such as this?

6. By what criteria is an employee's performance evaluated?

7. Could you give me the names of several other organizations that I should contact?

8. What advice would you give to a potential employee wishing to enter an organization like yours?

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN APPLYING, ASK THE FOLLOWING:

9. What is the best method for getting an employment interview with your organization? Resume? Walk-in? Call?

10. Whom should I contact?

11. When jobs become available, are they advertised? Posted?

12. What would you recommend to an applicant as the best way to get a job with your organization?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH SOMEONE IN A JOB YOU WOULD LIKE:

1. How long have you worked in this job?
2. How long have you worked for this organization?
3. What are your major responsibilities?
4. Who is your immediate supervisor? What is his/her title?

   Who is his/her immediate supervisor? What is the supervisor's title?
5. What do you perceive to be the major rewards of this job?
6. What do you like most about this job?
7. What are the major frustrations in this job?
8. What are the most frequently recurring problems?
9. Is your job better or worse now than it was a few years ago? Why?
10. What advice would you give to a person coming into a job like yours?
11. What are the education and experience requirements for this job?
12. Do you know anyone else whom it would be helpful for me to interview?

It is recommended that you keep a card file during your job search, with a separate card for each person with whom you talk. Information you would probably like to include is:

Name of person interviewed
Job title
Name of Organization
Address
Telephone Number
Questions/notes

Rules for Brainstorming (Bristol, 1974)

1. Criticism of ideas is not allowed. During brainstorming, ideas are recorded without comment or evaluation. Later, when the brainstorming process has been completed, evaluation of the alternatives takes place.

2. "Free wheeling" is encouraged. Wild ideas may stimulate other participants to think of new alternatives. Also, outrageous ideas may be toned down later when the options are evaluated.

3. Quantity is encouraged. The list of ideas can always be shortened later. The more alternatives there are, the greater the likelihood of "prizewinners".

4. Combinations and variations of others' ideas are welcome. Participants may contribute spin-offs of previously mentioned ideas or combinations of other participants' contributions. Often the new ideas are even better than the original.

DIFFICULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. You seem to have had quite a few jobs. Can you explain why there's been so much change? (Interviewer really means that you look like a job-hopper, and that you'd better have a good explanation.)

2. With the kind of experience you've had, wouldn't this job bore you? (Interviewer probably thinks you are over-qualified, and may just want to use this job as a temporary stop-gap until something better comes along.)

3. Have you had any experience in this kind of work? (A less direct, but similar question to the one above.)

4. Have you ever been fired or quit a job? Please explain. (Interviewer is looking for clues to serious problems or job difficulties which might carry over.)

5. Why haven't you worked recently? (A less direct, but similar question to the one above.)

6. Do you have any health problems? (Interviewer wants to know if you have had heart trouble, mental illness, alcoholism, or other health problem which might cause work problems.)

7. Have you ever had any serious illness or injuries? (Less direct, but same basic question as above. You don't have to go into your whole health history for the interviewer.)

8. What kinds of people rub you the wrong way? (Interviewer really wants to know how you relate to other people.)

9. What do you know about our company? (Interviewer is really trying to find out how interested you are, and whether you were motivated enough to try to find out something about this company.)

10. Why are you interested in this job? (Again, a question about motivation; are you really interested in the job, or just willing to take anything you can get.)

11. Are you collecting any retirement, pension, or disability payments? (Interviewer really wants to know if you need money enough to really be willing to work, or if you are so desperate for money that you'll jump at anything whether you can do it or not.)

12. How will you get to work? Do you have a car? (Interviewer really wants to know if you will take the responsibility for getting to work regularly and on time.)

13. What would you do if a co-worker said you shouldn't have been hired because of your age? (Interviewer may think you are too old for the job; also, may be interested in how you get along with difficult co-workers.)

14. We're a fast-paced outfit. Do you find that you have trouble keeping up these days? (Another question about whether you may be too old.)

15. How did your past employers treat you? (Interviewer is really interested in how loyal you will be; if you "bad-mouth" any previous employers, you may carry grudges and may not be loyal to a new employer.)

16. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? (Interviewer wants to know if you have confidence in yourself; also whether you are honest enough with yourself to know your weaknesses. It is important here, in describing weaknesses, to turn them around so that they are really strengths.)

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP

JOB COUNSELING

Session 6: Qualifications Summary; Completing Applications

OBJECTIVES:

- To share experiences of doing field surveys.
- To introduce the qualifications summary and its purpose and place in the job search strategy.
- To provide guidelines to assist group members in writing a qualifications summary.

AGENDA:

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

   a. Briefly review what was covered in the last session.

   b. Preview what will be covered in this session.

2. REVIEW OF HOMEWORK (45 MINUTES)

Ask each group member to share with the full group the results of his/her field survey experience. Each person should discuss the following issues:

   a. the position

   b. who was interviewed

   c. how the interview was scheduled

   d. the questions asked, and how they were answered (summary of content of the interview)

   e. the group member's feelings before, during, and after the interview

   f. the group member's perception of the interviewee's reactions to the interview

   g. things that went well/things that may have been done differently

   h. what was learned

   i. what follow-up, if any, is planned

   j. reactions, comments, etc.

It may be helpful to put this list of topics on the board to assist group members in discussing their surveys.

It may be helpful, prior to the group, to ask a group member who is comfortable before the group to speak first, to alleviate anxiety and model an appropriate response.

After each member has shared his/her experiences, use the remainder of time to facilitate a group discussion of reactions to the field survey technique.

3. BREAK (10 MINUTES)

4. MINI-LECTURE: THE QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY (10 MINUTES)

Employment application procedures vary widely. However, at some point in the process the job seeker will be asked to present, either verbally, in a resume, or on an application form, a summary of his or her qualifications for the job. Being able to present this information effectively is a major advantage; the applicant will appear confident in his or her own strengths and abilities, and organized in the manner of presentation. This is one area of the application process in which the question (although not the format) is known in advance, and a little time in preparation is sure to pay handsome dividends.

The qualifications summary is a written statement of your work history, skills, abilities, achievements, and personal strengths. It is for your personal use as an organizational tool; it is not given to the employer, or to anyone. Basically it is a worksheet, a structured format to assist you in organizing your "selling points," and to help you present them in a clear, organized manner that will show your unique qualifications in the best possible light. Reviewing your qualifications summary prior to an interview with a prospective employer will help you to market yourself more effectively; having your qualifications summary with you when you fill out job applications will ensure that you do not leave out important information, that you describe your past experience clearly and effectively, and that you accentuate your personal strengths. Remember that interviewers, and application reviewers, usually have more than enough qualified applicants for the position, and are, in effect, looking for reasons to "screen people out." The inability to communicate one's qualifications effectively has kept many qualified people from getting jobs that they wanted. Formulating and utilizing a qualifications summary will prevent this from happening to you.

The Qualifications Summary focuses on three areas:

- Demographic information: (name, address, social security number, hospitalization information, names and addresses of references, etc.) Don't be caught having to say, "I'll get back to you with that information."

- Work history - paid and unpaid: In listing your work history, do not leave gaps. Include volunteer work, church-related work, etc. Wherever you are, you have been using your personal abilities and skills. Take, for example, a person who has been "just a housewife": think for a moment of the skills necessary to be a homemaker. Budgeting, child care, home economics, cooking, driving, coordinating activities, etc., etc. The list goes on and on. Do not make the mistake of thinking that just because you weren't paid for something, the employer is not interested and that it will not count in your favor.

Under each heading in your work history, you will include the skills and abilities that you used in performing that task; the personal characteristics that helped you to perform the task effectively; and the achievements that resulted from your efforts. It will be helpful to use the materials developed in the various self-assessment exercises, but do not feel limited to areas that were generated by previous exercises. Writing the qualifications summary, in itself, may serve as an exercise to help you get in touch with other personal assets.

- Thirdly, the qualifications summary allows space for a listing of interests, hobbies, talents, etc. -- anything that may help "sell" you to an employer. You should be creative here; refer again to your self-assessment results, and incorporate anything that will make you more marketable.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY (10 MINUTES)

At this point the facilitator will distribute the Qualifications Summary Worksheet. Allow a few minutes for the group to review the form. It should be explained that the worksheet is only a guideline and that each individual's unique qualifications require a different structure for each summary. Since there is no way to construct an all-inclusive form, participants should feel free to add to or amend this form as necessary.

Allow FIVE MINUTES for individuals to begin filling out their qualifications summary, based on the information obtained from the various self-assessment exercises. The initial demographic information need not be filled out at this time; it may be easier for the participants to pull together this information while at home. Make it clear that, for the purposes of the exercise, it is essential to complete at least a full description of their last employment period, whether as a paid employee, homemaker, volunteer, etc.

6. INTERVIEW SKILLS PRACTICE (20 MINUTES)

Have the group break up into dyads. Each dyad determines the initial roles of applicant and interviewer. The applicant tells the interviewer the type of organization he/she wishes to use in the role play. The interviewer then initiates the role play with the following question:

"Tell me something about the kind of work you are doing now."

Using the information on the Qualifications Summary Worksheet, the applicant should formulate a response giving dates of employment, job title and description, duties and responsibilities, skills and abilities used in the job, personal strengths which were of help in the performance of the job duties, and any highlights or achievements. The applicant should try to accentuate the portions of the job history which would be relevant to the position being sought: for example, if the job being considered is that of a receptionist, and the previous work is that of a hospital volunteer, the applicant should emphasize interpersonal relations experience and skills. If necessary, the interviewer may facilitate the interaction with brief, appropriate, open-ended questions. After FIVE MINUTES, the dyads will process the interaction, focusing on relevant feedback for the applicant. After FIVE MINUTES of process, reverse roles and repeat the procedure.

The large group reconvenes, and the leader facilitates a brief discussion of participants' reactions (FIVE MINUTES).

7. DISCUSSION: FILLING OUT APPLICATIONS (10 MINUTES)

The qualifications summary is an essential organizational tool for completing job applications. If job descriptions, discussions of skills and abilities, etc., are clearly and concisely presented, the application will read much more impressively. Facilitator will distribute a typical job application form to the full group; the group will discuss ways in which questions on the form could be answered to present the applicant in the most favorable light, which questions may be skipped over, which items are no longer legal, etc. The group leader should emphasize that the job application form is much more than "filling in the blanks"--here too there is opportunity for creativity and expression of individual assets. Note particularly any open-ended sections, and emphasize the importance of attending to detail in completing these items.

8. CLOSURE (10 MINUTES)

a. Allow for reactions to this session.

b. Review what was covered in this session.

c. Preview what will be done in the next session.

d. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: Complete the Qualifications Summary Worksheet.

e. Remind the group of the time and date of the next meeting, and what to bring with them, then adjourn.

FORMS AND WORKSHEETS

FOR SESSION SIX

Qualifications Summary Worksheet

The purpose of the qualifications summary worksheet is to discover and put on paper those things you may wish to communicate to a potential employer, either in an interview, a resume, or on an application form. All information will not be relevant for each situation; utilize the information in each situation that you feel will be to your best advantage.

Name _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____ Work Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Social Security _____ - _____ - _____

Health Insurance, Medicare, Blue Cross, etc. _____

Education: Grade School _____ Dates _____

High School _____ Dates _____

College(s)

Name of Institution	Degree, Major	Dates Attended

Other Training _____

_____

References: job-related

(1) Name _____ Title _____

Address _____

City _____ Phone _____

(2) Name _____ Title _____

Adress _____

City _____ Phone _____

(3) Name _____ Title _____

Address _____

City _____ Phone _____

(4) Name_____ Title_____

Address_____

City_____ Phone_____

References: personal

(1) Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Phone_____

(2) Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Phone_____

(3) Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Phone_____

(4) Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Phone_____

Other relevant demographic data: organizations, union memberships, offices held, etc.

History: List chronologically, beginning with most recent period of time. Do not skip any time periods. List all work, paid or volunteer. If several activities are concurrent, list all (e.g., paid employment and volunteer activities).

(1) Job or Activity: _____ Company or Organization _____

Address: _____ Supervisor: _____

Dates: From _____ To _____ Starting Salary _____ Ending _____

Job description: _____

_____

_____

Personal skills and abilities relevant to the job: _____

_____

_____

Personal characteristics or strengths utilized: _____

_____

Achievements (personal and public): _____

_____

_____

Reason for leaving: _____

_____

_____

(2) Job or Activity: _____ Company or Organization _____

Address: _____ Supervisor: _____

Dates: From _____ To _____ Starting Salary _____ Ending _____

Job description: _____

_____

_____

Personal skills and abilities relevant to the job: _____

_____

_____

Personal characteristics or strengths utilized: _____

_____

Achievements (personal and public): _____

_____

_____

Reason for leaving: _____

_____

_____

(3) Job or Activity:_____ Company or Organization_____

Address:_____ Supervisor:_____

Dates: From_____ To_____ Starting Salary_____ Ending_____

Job description:_____

Personal skills and abilities relevant to the job:_____

Personal characteristics or strengths utilized:_____

Achievements (personal and public):_____

Reason for leaving:_____

(4) Job or Activity:_____ Company or Organization_____

Address:_____ Supervisor:_____

Dates: From_____ To_____ Starting Salary_____ Ending_____

Job description:_____

Personal skills and abilities relevant to the job:_____

Personal characteristics or strengths utilized:_____

Achievements (personal and public):_____

Reason for leaving:_____

(Use Extra Pages if Necessary)

Other Skills (languages, tools, machines, talents, etc.):

Miscellaneous (interests, hobbies, travel, etc.):

Other information:

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP

JOB COUNSELING

Session 7: Developing Job Leads; Contacting Employers; Resumes

OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce a method of developing job leads.
- To provide training and practice in stating one's qualifications to facilitate job leads and job interviews.
- To emphasize the importance of following up on job interviews.
- To provide training and practice in resume writing using the qualifications summary worksheet.

AGENDA:

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

   a. Briefly review what was covered in the last session.

   b. Preview what will be covered in this session.

   c. Give the group a few minutes to ask questions or share experiences concerning completion of their qualifications summary worksheet.

2. MINI-LECTURE: DEVELOPING JOB LEADS (10 MINUTES)

It is important to know how to "sell" yourself, not only during job interviews, but in order to get job interviews as well. This means being able to tell people directly and effectively what your qualifications are and what you want to do. Only 20% to 50% of job openings, depending upon level of the job, are filled through the "front door", or through personnel offices, newspaper ads, or job listings with placement agencies such as the Virginia Employment Commission or private employment agencies. From 50% to 80% of all job openings are filled through the "back door", or before the personnel office even learns of the openings, through word-of-mouth referral or direct contact with the person doing the hiring.

This means that at least half of the jobs for which you are qualified will be filled without your being considered for them unless you take action to track them down. The way to do this is by contacting as many appropriate people as you can in person, by telephone, or by letter, in order to develop leads. Personal contact is the most effective, and telephone contact is more effective than direct mail.

Your approach should be to tell each person you contact what you CAN do and what you WANT to do, then ask if he or she knows anyone who might be able to use someone like yourself. If you are given leads, write down their names and how to contact them by phone or by mail, and be sure to ask the person giving you the leads if you may use his or her name when contacting them (this helps you to get past secretaries!). You then contact each lead and follow the same process. Each contact you make should usually result in a job interview or more leads. The more contacts you make, the more leads you develop; the more leads you develop, the greater your chances of receiving interviews and job offers.

It is important to remember, especially when contacting potential employers, to ask "Do you know anyone who might be interested in my qualifications?", NOT "Do you have a job opening for which you could consider me?" The reason is that if you directly ask someone for a job, you put them on the defensive. No one likes to be a "bad guy" and turn someone down who is looking for a job. When you ask, "Do you know anyone who might be interested?", if the potential employer IS interested, it is easy for them to say so. If not, you have taken them "off the hook" by not making them turn you down directly. Also, you have given them the opportunity to be helpful to you by giving you leads, and since most people want to be helpful, very often they will suggest one or more other people for you to contact.

The best people to contact are those who are in a direct position to hire people in the kind of job you are seeking. For example, if you are looking for a clerical position, this might be the Office Manager or the Controller of a company. For a sales position, the Sales Supervisor or Sales Manager would be appropriate; for a night watchman job, the Security Officer or Safety Officer. If you can, it is best to find out the name of the appropriate person and to contact them by name.

There are several ways to go about this. One way is to look for a local industrial directory. Most localities have such publications, often published by the state or local Chamber of Commerce, which list the names and addresses of all of the companies and organizations in the community, their product or service, and the company officers and major department heads. Ask your local reference librarian. Another way is to go through the yellow pages of the telephone directory, locate places which might have the kind of work you are looking for, call the listed number, and ask whoever answers the phone for the name(s) of the person(s) who supervises such jobs. I am sure you can think of other sources of information.

Don't make it a secret that you are looking for work. Use the same approach of saying what you can do and what you want to do, and asking your friends, acquaintances, relatives, and anyone else if they know anyone who might be interested. You have nothing to lose. Even though you might think there isn't the slightest chance someone would know of a lead for you, you will often be suprised. And remember, the more leads you get, the better your chances of finding a job.

3. SKILLS TRAINING: STATING YOUR QUALIFICATIONS(30 MINUTES)

a. Introducing the Statement of Qualifications Worksheet (10 Minutes).

Hand out the Statement of Qualifications Worksheet to the group. Explain that this worksheet outlines the basic points to be covered, and the order in which they should be covered, when making direct contacts to develop leads. These points are the same whether the contact is in person, by telephone, or by letter. Your statement of qualifications should be concise, or you run the risk of losing the attention of the contact. At the same time, you should include enough information to have maximum impact on the person. It is probably a good idea to fill out a separate worksheet for each kind of job you are interested in, if you are looking for more than one kind of work. It is an even better idea to fill out a separate worksheet for each contact with a potential employer.

When contacting someone, the first thing to say is why you are contacting that particular person. You should indicate that you are trying to find employment, the type of job you are seeking, and let the person know why you thought he or she would be able to give you some advice. (Remember, you are not asking them for a job, but for their help and expert advice.) The next step is to describe the type of job you are looking for -- not just the job title, but the kinds of things you want to do in the job, the things you can do particularly well. The third step is to describe your qualifications to do that kind of job, stressing your past accomplishments, achievements, skills, etc., rather than your job titles and duties. Finally, you ask the person if he or she can suggest anyone who might be interested in your qualifications, or can give you any advice about how best to find such a job.

Pass out the sample contact letter, and the sample "script" of a telephone call illustrating the above. Then allow the remainder of the ten minutes for the group members to work on their own worksheets.

b. Skills Practice: Telephone Contacting (20 minutes).

Divide the group into pairs. Provide each pair with an audio cassette tape recorder and a tape. Instruct the pairs that they are to role play telephone calls between a job seeker and a potential employer. The roles of job seeker and potential employer are alternated between members of each pair.

The job seeker uses the sample telephone call "script" and his or her own Statement of Qualifications Worksheet to practice what he or she would say in a phone call to a potential employer, recording it on the tape recorder. At the conclusion of the "call," the tape is played, and both partners listen for things which were done well and for ways to improve.

The roles are switched and the procedure is repeated, switched again and repeated, etc., until time is called. The objective is to try to improve both words and delivery each time.

At the conclusion of the exercise, suggest to the members that they continue to use cassette recorders on their own to practice both contacting leads and job interviewing.

4. BREAK (10 MINUTES)

5. MINI-LECTURE: THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOW-UP (5 MINUTES)

One aspect of the job-seeking process which is most often neglected is following up on job interviews. We live in a society where simple courtesies -- for example, the "bread-and-butter" note thanking a host or hostess for their hospitality -- are being more and more neglected. For that reason, an appropriate letter or telephone call following a job interview can pay big dividends in receiving more favorable consideration, simply because so few people take the time or trouble to do so.

(Pass out copies of the sample follow-up letter.) The effective telephone call or interview should express the following:

a. Appreciation for the opportunity to interview for the job.

b. High degree of interest in the company and/or job.

c. Brief re-cap of one's most significant qualifications for the job.

d. Hope for favorable consideration and confidence that they will be pleased with your performance if given the chance.

e. Anticipation of learning of their decision.

The following conversation with an employer is an interesting example of the way follow-up can sometimes pay off:

"When I hired W.G. for this position, it was mostly his initiative which impressed me. He really didn't meet the educational requirements for the job, but he seemed so confident. I felt sure he could learn by osmosis. That has proven to be the case."

"What do you mean by initiative?"

"That's easy! After the first round of interviews, G. was not being considered, mostly because personnel eliminated him on the basis of education. He called me and asked if his resume and report of the interview had gotten to my desk yet. He was anxious for a decision. I didn't know why he called me; I didn't interview him."

"You didn't?"

"No, personnel did. I have no idea how he got my name or number. Well, I called down to personnel to ask about him. It seemed he had some good ideas. Frankly, I wasn't as interested in G. as in his ideas. But he made it seem that the ideas were worthless without him."

"How did he do that?"

"On the phone he talked about the future. He talked about developing his ideas. He backed them up. Supported them. I think he'll work out here."

"What about the others being considered for the job?"

"None of the others called back."

It is even possible to profit from follow-up if you are turned down for a job! You can contact the interviewer, express your appreciation for being considered for the job even though someone else was hired, and ask if he or she knows anyone else or any other organization that might be interested in your qualifications. Also, you can ask for the interviewer's advice concerning your presentation of your qualifications, your interview behavior, etc., and any suggestions he or she might have for improving your presentation.

One caution about follow-up, however. It should always be on the basis of expressing appreciation for the interview and good feelings towards the interviewer and company. You should be careful to avoid "pushing" for a favorable decision, threatening the interviewer with other offers (unless you actually have them and must make a decision immediately), or "bugging" the interviewer by contacting too often or seeming desperately eager.

6. SKILLS PRACTICE: WRITING RESUMES (30 MINUTES)

a. Mini-Lecture: Principles of Resume Writing (10 Minutes)

The purpose of a resume is to detail your qualifications for a particular job. The best way to use resumes is to avoid submitting one until AFTER the job interview. That way, you can select what to include in the resume on the basis of information you have learned about the job during the interview. The next best approach is to prepare a resume for each separate job for which you apply, again including in the resume only what is relevant to that particular job. In cases where it is necessary to write one general resume in order to run off multiple copies, it must be written very carefully. The main problem with such a resume is that trying to include all the possible qualifications which might be of interest for a variety of possible jobs can make it too long, as well as cause it to look poorly focused, choppy, and badly integrated.

Many job seekers use the technique of large-scale mailing of unsolicited resumes, and cannot understand why they hardly ever receive any replies. In fact, the odds of being interviewed or hired on the basis of an unsolicited resume alone are very slight. For example, in one industrial plant of 6,600 employees, an average of 12,500 resumes per year were screened by the personnel office in order to hire about 75 white collar workers per year. And most of these resumes were received from employment agencies which received regular listings of job openings, so that at least some of them were pre-screening the resumes they submitted.

This represents a ratio of 1 hire per 167 resumes. Considering only unsolicited resumes mailed in directly by job seekers, the ratio is more like over 1000 resumes received for each 1 hire. Thus you can see how slim one's chances are, unless one uses resumes as a supplement to other job-seeking efforts.

(Hand out sample resumes.) As you can see from the handouts, there are basically two styles of resumes: the chronological resume, which most people use, and the functional resume. The chronological resume lists each of one's jobs in reverse order beginning with the most recent. The main advantage of the chronological resume is that it shows one's progression of responsibilities from job to job. One disadvantage is that gaps in employment, setbacks in career progress, questionable job moves, and other such adverse information are more apparent. Another disadvantage, especially for the experienced older worker, is that it can cause one to appear over-qualified, thus reducing one's chances of being hired.

The principal advantage of the functional resume is that it is more easily tailored to the specific job. The most favorable and relevant information is included and other information can be omitted. One's accomplishments, abilities, and other qualifications can be shown in much more integrated fashion. The main disadvantage to the functional resume is that some interviewers, especially in personnel offices, find the chronological job history more informative.

Here are a few tips which can increase the effectiveness of both chronological and functional resumes.

(1) The shorter, the better, within reason. The reason for the common rule-of-thumb that a resume should be only one page, if possible, and never more than two, is that people who read resumes are busy. They are very unlikely to take the time to read long resumes, and are more likely to throw them away without reading them.

(2) No matter how short, assume that your resume will not be read completely. This means that you should, in general, list information in DECREASING order of importance. That is, put the most important things at the beginning and the least important at the end. That way, if the entire resume is not read, at least the person will have considered your strongest qualifications for the job rather than your weakest.

Your name, address, and telephone number should be the first items on the resume. Next should be a statement of your job objective. Many people omit this from their resumes, but if you have a clear objective which is consistent with the job you are seeking, it makes you look better. On most resumes, the next item is education. However, remember that the most important information should come first. In general, if you have a college degree, or technical training which is directly relevant to the job, then education should come before experience qualifications. On the other hand, if your experience qualifications are stronger than your education, list them first and save education until later. As for some other types of information one often finds on resumes, such as hobbies, personal data, extracurricular school activities, clubs, etc., it is probably better to leave them off unless they have some obvious

direct connection demonstrating qualifications for the job.

(3) Always talk about achievements, accomplishments, skills, knowledge acquired, etc., rather than just job duties. A potential employer is interested in what you can do now for him or her; your past accomplishments are a far better indication of what you are capable of doing now than your past duties. When someone reads a list of duties on a resume, there is always the question of whether these duties were performed poorly or well. With accomplishments, there is not this question.

b. Skills Practice: Resume Writing (20 minutes)

Divide the group into triads. Allow TEN MINUTES for each person to begin writing his or her resume, using their qualifications summary, statement of qualifications worksheet, and other materials. Let each person choose whether a chronological resume or a functional resume would be more appropriate for himself or herself. Emphasize that they should focus on accomplishments, abilities, strengths, etc., rather than description of duties.

When time is up, allow another TEN MINUTES for the members of each triad to take turns reviewing what they have written with their partners, receiving comments on what is done well and suggestions for improvement. Then re-form the large group.

7. CLOSURE (20 MINUTES)

a. Allow ample time for discussion of the two exercises. If discussion is slow getting started, "prime the pump" by asking them questions about difficulties they may have had either in practicing their phone contacts or in starting to write their resumes. It will be unusual if you don't get a lot of questions and discussion.

b. Review what was covered in the session.

c. Preview what will be done next session.

d. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

(1) Complete writing resumes.

(2) Practice telephone contacts on tape recorder.

(3) Make at least one live telephone contact.

e. Ask for the group's feedback on this session.

FORMS AND WORKSHEETS

FOR SESSION SEVEN

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS WORKSHEET

1. Why are you contacting this person? (Why you thought he or she could advise you--if appropriate, say something positive about the person's position or reputation, the reputation of the company, etc.)

2. What kind of work are you looking for? (You don't have to use a job title just state the kinds of things you want to do and can do well.)

3. What are your qualifications for this kind of work? (Stress past accomplishments, achievements, strengths, skills, education, etc., as appropriate, but be brief and succinct.)

4. Ask if the person knows of anyone who might be interested in your qualifications or can give you any helpful advice. (If writing a letter, give a specific date and time that you will call the person.)

SAMPLE CONTACT LETTER

May 13, 1980

Mr. William A. Bailey, Retail Manager
Jackson Department Store, Incorporated
One North Seventh Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 27609

Dear Mr. Bailey:

Mr. Don Thompson, manager of the local J. C. Penney's store, suggested that I contact you, stating that you were one of the most knowledgeable people in Charlotte regarding retail sales work. At this time I am beginning to explore job possibilities in retail sales, and would like to meet with you to discuss the current status of the local job market.

I am interested in obtaining a position as salesperson of children's toys. Although I have been out of the job market for several years, my experience as a wife and mother has developed not only a knowledge of the product, but also organizational skills which I would now like to put to use in a vocational setting. I have also been taking Adult Education courses in Business and Sales at Central High School.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to find some time to assist me in my job search. I feel that it would be very beneficial to me, as a "re-entry woman", to talk to someone with an intimate working knowledge of the local job market; I will call you early Friday morning to see if we can schedule a time to talk.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Rose A. Busch
1619 Americana Drive
Charlotte, North Carolina 27609
(919) 770-7021

P.S. If you could suggest other persons with whom I could meet, that would also be very helpful.

SAMPLE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

WB: "Retail Manager, Mr. Bailey."

RB: "Mr. Bailey, my name is Rose Busch. I've been a housewife for several years, and am now planning to go back to work as a sales clerk. I talked to Mr. Thompson at J.C. Penney's, and he told me that you have a great deal of knowledge about the local employment picture. It's been a long time since I've been in the job market, and I'm wondering if I could talk with you and get some advice."

WB: "Well, right now we don't have any openings at Jackson's."

RB: "Yes, sir. I'm not ready to look for a job. What I'm trying to do at this point is to talk with as many people as I can who are in a position to know something about my chances, and ways in which I could best apply my energies."

WB: "Well, I'll be glad to do what I can. Tell me a little about yourself. Why do you want to go into sales?"

RB: "I'm particularly interested in children's toys. I've worked as a housewife and mother for the past 21 years, raising two boys and a girl, and definitely feel that I can offer an excellent working knowledge of the product. When it comes to children's toys, I definitely 'know what to look for', and feel that I could do an excellent job assisting customers."

WB: "Most places require their salespeople to have a high school education. Tell me about your educational background."

RB: "I have a high school diploma from Central. During the past two years, I've been taking Adult Education courses there, such as Basic Sales Principles and Practices, Bookkeeping, and Speaking More Effectively. I've really enjoyed these classes and have learned a great deal from them."

* * * * * *

(Other relevant topics discussed)

* * * * * *

WB: "Well, Mrs. Busch, as I told you earlier, we don't have any openings right now. However, and this isn't widely known yet, we will be opening a new store next spring in Gastonia, and will hire several new staff members at that time. Some of our downtown people will transfer to help with the new operation, so we will also be looking for people to work here. Could you give me your name and number?"

RB: "Better yet, why don't you let me send you my resume."

WB: "That would be excellent. If anything comes up before the new store opens, we'll get in touch."

RB: "Thank you very much, Mr. Bailey. One last favor: you've been most helpful with your information. Do you know of any other people, at Jackson's or elsewhere in town, whom it would be worthwhile for me to contact?"

WB: "Sure. Mr. Browne does all of the hiring at Taylor's. I'm not sure of the current status of his personnel situation, but it would certainly be worth your while to talk with him. Also, Mr. Allen at Ward's would possibly be able to help."

RB: "May I tell them you referred me? I'm sure it would help me get through to them."

WB: "Of course."

RB: "Again, thank you very much for your time and assistance. I'll get my resume in the mail to you today, and will get in touch with Mr. Browne and Mr. Allen tomorrow. I hope something comes up at Jackson's, though. I've always been very impressed with your products, and know that I could sell them with confidence."

WB: "Thank you! We'll be back in touch."

RB: "Good-bye."

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER

May 15, 1980

Mr. William A. Bailey, Retail Manager
Jackson Department Store, Incorporated
One North Seventh Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 27609

Dear Mr. Bailey:

Thank you very much for the opportunity of talking with you Monday. Naturally, I was very interested to hear of your plans to open a new branch in Gastonia in the fall, and appreciate your sharing this information with me. I have enclosed my resume, as we discussed, and hope you will consider me when you begin hiring new personnel. As you can see, while I have had no formal experience in retail sales work, I do have a wealth of applied knowledge regarding children's toys, and feel that I could put my skills and abilities to good use as a Jackson employee. You may be assured that, given the opportunity, I will provide you and your organization with my very best effort.

I would also like to thank you for putting me in touch with Mr. Allen at Ward's Company and Mr. Browne at Taylor's. I have contacted both gentlemen, and hope to meet with them in the near future. Both seemed eager to talk with me when I mentioned that you had referred me to them.

As I expressed to you Friday, however, my primary interest is in working for Jackson's. Thank you very much for your time and help, and I hope to hear from you again soon.

Sincerely,

Rose A. Bus[illegible]
1619 Ameri[illegible]ana Drive
Charlotte, North Carolina 27609
[illegible]70-7021

Chronological Resume*

SUSAN K. TURNER
379 Meadow Lane
Abington, Pennsylvania 19001
(215) 653-1358

Objective: Secretarial position which will afford opportunities to learn and progress. Prefer the eastern Montgomery County area.

Work History:

6-78 to 7-80 Blackstone Products Co., Willow Grove, PA
Job Title: Typist
Duties: Worked in a typing pool, transcribing dictaphone tapes and typing from handwritten drafts for sales department.
Salary: $800.00 per month.

3-76 to 6-78 Continental Bank, Glenside, PA
Job Title: Receptionist
Duties: Operated a PBX system, greeted customers, and typed correspondence.
Salary: $600.00 per month.

7-75 to 3-76 Jones Auto Sales, Jenkintown, PA
Job Title: Filing Clerk
Duties: Filed sales orders. Kept inventory on Kardex forms on 12 types and 26 patterns of automobile seat covers.
Salary: $500.00 per month.

Education: Montgomery County Community College, Ambler, PA
Major: Business Education
Associate in Arts expected 1982.

Abington High School, Abington, PA
Diploma, 1975.

References: Available upon request.

*Adapted from Nutter, 1976.

Functional Resume*

ROSE A. BUSCH
1619 Americana Drive
Charlotte, North Carolina 27609
(919) 770-7021

Objective: Employment as a sales clerk in children's toys for a department store or specialty shop.

Education: Graduated from Central High School in 1958.

Have completed the following Adult Education courses at Central High School:

Speaking More Effectively
Basic Sales Principles and Practices
Bookkeeping
Assertiveness Training

Background: As mother of three, I have first-hand knowledge of children's toys. Have shopped in all downtown and most suburban stores and am familiar with current merchandise.

Have been responsible for all aspects of household management for 21 years. Responsibilities include budgeting, purchasing, bookkeeping; planning, organizing, and coordinating family activities; and child care.

References: Available upon request.

*Adapted from Nutter, 1976.

STRUCTURED TRAINING GROUP

JOB COUNSELING

Session 8: Decision Making

OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce a systematic method for making decisions.
- To allow group members to practice decision-making skills.
- To provide closure on the eight-session training package.
- To provide participants with the opportunity to give trainers feedback.

AGENDA:

1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF HOMEWORK (10 MINUTES)

   a. Briefly review what was covered in the last session.

   b. Preview what will be covered in this session.

   c. Briefly review homework from last session. Have the group ask questions or share experiences concerning completion of their resumes and their telephone contacts.

2. MINI-LECTURE: DECISION MAKING (10 MINUTES)

The decision-making process is a basic activity of daily living. Every activity, no matter how simple, requires a continual process of making choices. Very often these choices are made without much thought, and without major consequences. Whether to walk to work or take the bus, for example, is a simple choice. Processes such as finding a job, however, require a series of major life decisions. Career choices have long-range effects on your lifestyle, your family, your leisure activities, and your personal satisfaction in life. In fact, few life decisions are more important than the choice of jobs. Unfortunately, many people use the same decision-making strategy about job-hunting as they do about riding the bus. Making effective decisions requires careful planning, gathering of information, and evaluation of options.

Different people have different decision-making styles. Basically, the various styles may be divided into two broad categories: emotional and systematic.

Problems, especially complex problems such as career decisions, involve many components. At one point one component may be foremost in your mind (e.g., finances), and at another point a completely different concern (e.g., job satisfaction) may be most important. As a result, the problem may seem vague and frustrating; coming to grips with such an ill-defined concern may seem impossible. As a result of the growing frustration, you make a spur-of-the-moment choice; the problem is too big to analyze and tackle systematically, and your decision is to do something, anything, and see what happens. This type of impulsive decision-making process may be satisfactory in some situations, but in the job market it all too often results in the out-of-the-frying-pan-into-the-fire syndrome. You react emotionally to a bad situation and move into a worse one. This type of decision-making is reactive--your choice is a reaction to pressures in the environment, or to internal pressures such as frustration or giving up.

A more productive method of making major decisions involves a systematic collection of information and exploration of alternatives. In this method, you act, rather than react. You take the initiative, investigate all of the factors that enter into the problem, consider the consequences of each possible choice, and make a rational decision, choosing the course of action that will be in your best interest. Clearly, this process requires more time and work, but the chances of making the best choice, while not assured, are greatly increased.

There are many kinds of major vocational choices. The primary choice, of course, is to work or not to work; or, if you are currently employed, to stay where you are or to change jobs. It may be assumed that, since you have participated in this training, you have made the choice to return to work or change jobs. It might be interesting to stop and think of how this decision was made. Did you think it through carefully? Was it an impetuous decision? Was it born of necessity?

Other vocational choices include deciding which jobs, or types of jobs, you wish to pursue; whether, when you are offered a job, you should take it or keep looking; and (if you are lucky), choosing between two jobs which have been offered to you simultaneously. Other decisions, such as whether or not to move to take a job, may also enter the picture.

How does one systematically approach these major life decisions? There is a lot of research available on effective decision-making; most are variations of the following seven-step decision-making outline.* Some of these steps may sound simple, but each needs to be carefully thought through for the process to be effective.

Let's take, as an example, Mr. Jones, who is working as a clerk in a hardware store. The heavy lifting occasionally required is becoming very difficult for him, and the supervisor has asked him to step down from full-time to part-time work. Mr. Jones is trying to decide whether to stay with the company, or look for other work.

*Distribute list of decision making steps.

Step One is to identify the problem. Mr. Jones might react to his supervisor's request in a hostile manner, and deny his physical limitations. Were this to be the case, he would miss the real problem, and focus on the relationship (or lack of relationship) with his boss. It is very easy, sometimes, to lose touch with the real issue. Let's assume, however, that Mr. Jones agrees with his supervisor that his problem is that he can no longer do the work 40 hours a week.

Step Two is to define a goal. Good goals are specific, obtainable, and behavioral. "Get another job" would be too non-specific for Mr. Jones; "move up to management" may not be obtainable. "Reduce my anxiety about all this" is not behavioral. A clear goal would move Mr. Jones one step closer to solving his problem (although not necessarily solve it all at once). "Decide whether or not to accept the reduction in work hours" would be a good initial goal.

The Third Step involves exploring alternatives. At this point Mr. Jones, possibly with the help of others, looks at the various options open to him. It is essential to do this in a systematic fashion; most people recommend actually writing down the various options. In Mr. Jones' case he could:

- take the 20-hour position
- retire
- take the 20-hour job and look for other work
- quit and look for other work
- file a complaint and try to keep his 40-hour position

...etc. I'm sure you can think of several other alternatives.

The Fourth Step is to analyze the alternatives. Each alternative in a major decision will have several positive and negative consequences. Mr. Jones looks at each option and takes some time to think of the positive and negative results of taking that course of action, then writes them down. For example:

Option 1: Take the 20-hour position:

Positive	Negative
- more leisure time	- fear of eventual termination
- keep same work environment	- cut in pay
- stay in touch with friends	- cut in benefits
- use current skills	- makes him "feel old"
- avoid hassles of job search	- loss of status
...etc.	...etc.

Similarly, each other option has positive and negative consequences. Each option should be carefully analyzed.

The Fifth Step is to select the best alternative. This sounds difficult (and often is), but the process used in Step 4, systematically looking at all of the factors involved, will make the selection process much easier. Let's assume that Mr. Jones chooses to take the 20-hour job and to begin looking elsewhere.

Step Six is to put the plan into action. Mr. Jones accepts the job, and starts to look for other work, part- or full-time.

Step Seven follows directly from Step Six, and involves evaluating the outcome of the decision. If, after several weeks, Mr. Jones has several job possibilities, he has made a successful choice and is ready to move on to other choices. If, on the other hand, he is dissatisfied in working 20 hours and is having no luck in the job search, he needs to "re-cycle" the decision-making process, go back and re-assess his identification of the problem, his goals, and his alternatives, and repeat the process.

Two final points should be made. First, at several places along the decision-making process, it is often extremely helpful to receive input from others. Other people may be able to offer a fresh and objective view of the problem, think of alternatives, or consequences of those alternatives, that you may have missed. Secondly, however, it is clear throughout that you have the ultimate freedom and responsibility to make your own choices. The process allows for you to use the input of others, but others do not make decisions for you. The final choice is yours.

3. EXERCISE: DECISION MAKING PRACTICE (50 MINUTES)

Divide the group into smaller groups of three to four participants. Either a trainer or a group member is designated as the facilitator for each small group.

Give each participant a 4x6 index card. Instruct each person to write the following on his/her card: (1) the employment decision he/she currently faces, and (2) the goals that are associated with that decision. Point out that these are the first two steps of decision making. Also, emphasize that goals must be specific, obtainable, and behavioral.

Ask each person in the group to share what is on his/her card. Then ask for a volunteer who would like some assistance from the group in making his/her decision. The volunteer rereads the information on his/her index card and the group verifies that (1) the decision is clearly stated, and (2) the goals are specific, obtainable, and behavioral. (Do not proceed until these two criteria are met.)

The group then helps the volunteer generate alternatives (Step 3 of the decision making process). Each small group should have access to a blackboard or newsprint, on which the facilitator records the alternatives. With the group's assistance, the volunteer next lists positive and negative consequences of each alternative, which are also recorded by the facilitator. The newsprint sheets are then given to the volunteer (or he/she is given the opportunity to copy the information if a blackboard is used).

Ask for another volunteer, and repeat the process as time allows. Encourage participants who did not serve as volunteers to complete the problem solving process after the session. Stress that the actual decision (selection of an alternative) is the responsibility of the individual.

4. BREAK (10 MINUTES)

5. CLOSURE (40 MINUTES)

   a. Allow for discussion of the exercise (10 minutes).

   b. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: (1) Encourage participants to continue using the skills they have learned throughout training. (2) Encourage participants to contact the trainers when their employment status changes (i.e., give progress reports) and to call if they have any questions (5 minutes).

   c. Briefly review the content and process of the eight sessions (5 minutes).

   d. Conduct a final feedback session (20 minutes). Trainers should give feedback to the group, and the group should give feedback to the trainers. This process could be structured by asking each group member to share what he/she liked best and least about training and what he/she learned from participating.

FORMS AND WORKSHEETS

FOR SESSION EIGHT

DECISION MAKING STEPS

1. Identify the problem.
2. Define a goal.
3. Explore alternatives.
4. Analyze the alternatives.
5. Select the best alternative.
6. Put the plan into action.
7. Evaluate the outcome.

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CHAPTER VI

IN RETROSPECT

We feel that the training described in this manual breaks new ground in providing assistance to the older job seeker. As any new project, it was plagued at times with "bugs." While we do not pretend to be the final authority on structured training groups or working with the older job seeker, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the major (and sometimes painful) learning experiences we encountered in our implementation of the program.

Initially, we would like to re-emphasize that this project requires the full support of the agencies that send participants, and that both the agencies and the participants need to know what commitment is expected of them. Unfortunately, a few of our trainees came in knowing little more about the project than that it was directed toward older job applicants. Further frustration was experienced when the modules were presented, and a portion of the trainees did not have the backing to set up structured training groups of older job seekers at their home agencies.

This represents a communication problem, and it seems that two major steps are needed to prevent this lack of communication. First, the project director should sit down with the agency administrators and cover in detail both the goals and the methods of the project. It may be a good idea to have a written contract; the program guarantees the training, and the agency commits itself to its support.

Secondly, the potential participants also need to have a full picture; we found the initial structured interview to be a very effective way to simultaneously give a full overview of the project, and to assess the perceived needs of the prospective trainees. Any trainee questions about goals or methods should be answered at this point, not after the initiation of training.

Remember also to listen to the perceived needs, both of agencies and trainees. Our program was designed to serve employment counselors in Central Virginia; in other areas the population, agency structure, level of training of employment counselors, etc., may differ, necessitating adaptations in the package. Our program is definitely not written in stone.

Another important consideration is the availability of older job seekers themselves, to fill the groups run by the trainees. Many older individuals have a strongly negative opinion of any formal problem assistance program. Take time to find out what older job seekers in your community presently do to find jobs; work with trainees and agencies to promote community awareness of your project. Perhaps use a central phone number at the training agency to handle information and referral for the project. In general, do not expect older job seekers to rush in off the streets for such an innovative project; be prepared to do some personal, third party, and media outreach, and perhaps to establish inter-agency groups.

Selection of trainers has been discussed in a previous section, but it is worth repeating that a structured group program, no matter how well organized, relevant, and supported, is no better than the trainers. Topic knowledge, interpersonal and group skills, and enthusiasm for the project are all essential. At least one co-trainer should have some background in work with the elderly; at least one trainer should have some experience in teaching interpersonal skills, and in facilitating a group.

The gerontology information may be presented by a trainer, or consultant. Many local community colleges have programs and personnel geared toward working with the elderly. The local Area Agency on Aging may also be used as a resource. A good deal of training in gerontology is also conducted by the various state offices on aging. It may also be beneficial to see if a college or university in your area offers course work in gerontology or has university-related centers on aging, and to contact persons involved in any such program.

The interpersonal skills presented in our training are similar in content to those employed at the entry level by many graduate programs in psychology. For assistance in this area, it is again suggested that you contact a local college, university, or community college and find out what help is available. It may also be worthwhile to interest a local mental health agency in your work.

Selecting the group is also a vital concern. Look for individuals who are not "set in their ways." The best trainees have the intelligence, creativity, and sense of adventure to invest themselves wholeheartedly in a new project, and to wrestle with the difficulties (and reap the rewards) of coming at an old problem from a completely new angle. Trainees, as potential group leaders, must be ready to take risks, to withstand skepticism, and to not only implement, but advocate, new methods. If trainees are less than committed to the concepts involved, they will communicate this lukewarm attitude to the older applicants, and the structured group will never get off the ground.

* * * * * * * * *

Some specific points about the training formats may be helpful. As we indicated previously, we initially scheduled a large number of half-day sessions, hoping to cause minimal disruption in the trainees' daily work routine. Feedback from the group, however, clearly established that full days were preferable. Not only was more material covered at each meeting, but the total time from the beginning to the end of training (originally scheduled to be several months) was shortened. Full day training sessions are much more demanding on the trainees; not only is a good deal of physical stamina required, but also the creative resources to develop and incorporate enough training innovations to make the training consistently challenging and interesting will be taxed. Good training is never boring or routine; in addition to being educational, it must also be entertaining. People learn poorly when asleep. Vary the pace, the exercises, the topics, and a full-day workshop can be very productive and enjoyable for both trainers and group members.

In conclusion, one final word of advice: <u>flexibility</u>. More than once plans made months in advance were altered over lunch on the day of training. When this was done, it was a response to the immediate needs of the group, and the training was enhanced. In planning and in implementation, listen to your audience, listen to yourself. If you feel that things could go better with some alterations, by all means try. If a discussion is really involving the group, let it run overtime; if an exercise seems to wind down quickly, move on; if a "group gripe"

becomes apparent, air it; if a new topic seems of interest, explore it. Plans and agendas are guidelines, not rules. The best training is the most responsive training, and the best service you can offer to your group is to be responsive to their needs.

* * * * * * * * *

The staff of the Virginia Center on Aging are very interested in your experiences in utilizing this manual, and would welcome any feedback you may have to offer. If we may be of any assistance in the planning and implementation of your program, please feel free to contact us.

Please address all feedback and/or questions to:

Jean Gasen Romaniuk, Ph.D.
Virginia Center on Aging
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA 23298

APPENDIX

IDENTIFYING THE TRAINING NEED

Needs Assessment Interview Form

Name:_____ Date:_____

Job Title:_____ Interviewer:_____

Agency:_____

1. What is your typical work day/week like?

2. Approximately what percentage of your clients are 55 years old or older?

3. How do you feel about working with older clients?

4. What kinds of concerns do older clients present to you?

5. Could you tell me about your educational background?

6. Have you had any opportunities for continuing education in:

Personnel Issues Yes_____ No_____

If yes, specify_____

_____

Structured Training Groups Yes_____ No_____

If yes, specify_____

_____

Gerontology Yes_____ No_____

If yes, specify_____

_____

7. What specific skills would you like to develop during this training program?

8. Do you have any questions or comments about the training program?

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR TRAINING

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

SELECTION OF TRAINERS

NAMES OF POTENTIAL TRAINERS	STRENGTHS AS A TRAINER (e.g., able to give constructive feedback, flexible, etc.)	RELEVANT CONTENT AREAS OF EXPERTISE

DEVELOPING AN OVERALL PLAN FOR TRAINING

A Checklist of Planning Activities

_____ Overall objectives refined.

_____ Content areas listed.

_____ Total amount of time needed for training determined.

_____ Ideal number of participants, as well as acceptable minimum and maximum numbers, determined.

_____ Types of people most likely to benefit from training described.

DEVELOPING SUPPORT FOR TRAINING

Checklist of Activities for Developing Administrative Support

_____ Phone calls made to administrators of agencies, briefly describing the training program and inquiring about interest in the program.

_____ Follow-up letters sent, reiterating the content of the phone calls and requesting written support of the program.

_____ Follow-up phone calls made to administrators who did not send written responses.

_____ Invitation to a meeting with the trainers sent to interested administrators two weeks in advance.

_____ Meeting with administrators planned. Agenda should include: (a) introductions of trainers and administrators; (b) background information about the program; (c) a description of the content and methods of training; (d) a statement of the degree of commitment expected from participants; and (e) ample time for questions and discussion.

_____ Follow-up letters sent to administrators, thanking them for their support of the training program.

Checklist of Activities for Developing Participant Support

Prior to Training:

_____ Potential participants contacted individually to: (a) describe the training program; (b) communicate the degree of commitment expected of trainees; (c) determine level of interest in the program; (d) determine individual needs with regard to training content and methods; (e) discuss tentative schedules for training; and (f) elicit suggestions for training topics and activities.

_____ Follow-up calls made or letters sent to finalize list of trainees.

_____ Letters send to trainees to: (a) welcome them to the program; (b) give them a tentative schedule of meeting times and locations; and (c) as appropriate, update any information given to them earlier.

During Training:

_____ Extra compensations (e.g., coffee and donuts) planned for each session.

_____ Letters sent between sessions, reminding participants of the date, time, and location of the next session.

_____ Feedback from participants encouraged throughout training.

_____ Participants' feedback utilized while planning and conducting future sessions.

SESSION PLANNING GUIDE

Date:_____

Time:_____

Place:_____

Scheduled Breaks(times):_____

Specific needs addressed in this session:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Component: _____ Time:_____

Topic:_____

Learning Objectives:

1.

2.

3.

Speaker(s):_____

Handouts:_____

Audio-visual equipment/materials:_____

Activities/materials:_____

Evaluation:_____

Other:_____

Component:_____ Time:_____

Topic:_____

Learning Objectives:

1.

2.

3.

Speaker(s):_____

Handouts:_____

Audio-visual equipment/materials:_____

Activities/materials:_____

Evaluation:_____

Other:_____

Component:_____ Time:_____

Topic:_____

Learning Objectives:

1.

2.

3.

Speaker(s):_____

Handouts:_____

Audio-visual equipment/materials:_____

Activities/materials:_____

Evaluation:_____

Other:_____

CONDUCTING TRAINING SESSIONS

Checklist for Individual Training Sessions

I. Handouts

A. Available upon arrival:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

B. To be given out at a specific time:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

II. Audio-Visual Materials

_____ Slide projector (extension cord, extra light bulb, remote control)

_____ Carousel with slides in order

_____ Screen

_____ 16 mm projector (thread film prior to Session)

_____ Overhead projector (extension cord, transparencies, extra light bulb, markers)

_____ Newsprint (easel, markers)

_____ Blackboard, chalk, erasers

_____ Poster display

_____ Videotape equipment (monitor, camera, deck), cassette(s) (pre-test system)

_____ Other: _____

III. Arrangements at Facility

_____ Room rental (in advance)

_____ Room set-up

_____ Microphones

_____ Lights

_____ Heat/air conditioning

_____ Name of contact person at facility: _____

_____ Ice water and glasses

_____ Coffee/soft drink break arrangements (in advance): # expected _____ and time refreshment needed _____

_____ Lunch/dinner arrangements (in advance): # expected _____ and time of meal _____

_____ Name of group on marquee

_____ Restaurant guide for out-of-town participants

_____ Other: _____

IV. Arrangements for Outside Speaker(s)

_____ Room, meals, and local transportation

_____ Expense account forms and receipts

_____ Packet of relevant information

_____ Letter or contract detailing fees, dates, expectations, etc.

_____ Other: _____

V. Post-Session Details

_____ Thank-you note to speaker(s)

_____ Process expense accounts

_____ Process evaluations

_____ Record attendance

_____ Pay bills

_____ Establish file which includes all materials used during session

_____ Other:_____

EVALUATION OF TRAINING

1. Provide time during each session for verbal feedback.

2. Elicit written feedback at the conclusion of each training session. One format for these evaluations is given below:

Date: _____

Instructions: We'd like to get your quick, unabridged reactions to today's session. Be brief and honest. Check one for each item and use front and back for additional comments, if necessary. Thank you.

	Excel-lent	Very Good	Aver-age	Fair	Needs Work	Comments and Suggestions
Activity 1*						
Activity 2						
Activity 3						
Facilities						
General Organization						
Overall Evaluation						

*Give the title or a very brief description of each training activity.

3. Conduct a final evaluation. You may want to include the following items (or variations of them) which address the training program in general:

   a. List 3 things you liked most about training and why.

   b. List 3 things you liked least about training and why.

   c. List 3 things you have found most helpful to you in your work setting and why.

   d. List 3 things that you would change in the training program and why you would change them.

   e. Aside from the training content, what did you like most about coming to training sessions?

f. How often have you had the opportunity to use the training materials outside of the training sessions? (Provide responses, such as frequently, occasionally, infrequently, never.)

You may also want to include items concerning more specific aspects of training, e.g., content areas, activities, trainers, etc.